Commentary

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The Shape of Things to Come

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Books in Review: Edward Norden/ Sam Tanenhaus/ Jeffrey Marsh/Anita Susan Grossman/ David Brock

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Letters from Readers

The Boat People

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to respond to William McGurn's article, "The Scandal of the Boat People" [January], attacking the decision by the governments of the United Kingdom and Hong Kong to repatriate Vietnamese people from Hong Kong to Vietnam.

Among a number of inaccuracies, Mr. McGurn claims that the distinction between refugees and economic migrants was "invented by Great Britain." This is untrue. In Hong Kong, as in the United Kingdom, claims for political asylum are determined according to the definition embodied in the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol, which define as a refugee anyone unable or unwilling to return to his country "because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

Every Western democracy relies on that distinction in order to prevent a claim for political asylum being used to evade immigration controls. Insofar as the comprehensive plan of action agreed to last June in Geneva enshrines the principle of screening and return of non-refugees to their country of origin, it is a fundamentally *pro*-refugee document, not anti-refugee as Mr. McGurn argues.

In Hong Kong, screening is supervised by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR]. It includes an appeal process and the UNHCR has ultimate power to override the decision of the Hong Kong adjudicators and insist that an individual be given refugee status. The arrangements in Hong Kong are more thorough and offer many more safeguards to those claiming refugee status than can be found, for example, in the treatment of Haitian boat people turned away from the coasts of the United States.

To be fair to Mr. McGurn, he argues consistently that the UN Conventions are inadequate and that the Western world needs to be far more generous to people claiming political asylum. I question, though, whether he has thought through the practical consequences of such a policy. In the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America there are millions of people who, because of television and radio, know that life in the Western capitalist democracies is more prosperous and more peaceful than life at home and who, because of cheap air travel, can scrape together enough money to take their chances. They travel to the West and claim political asylum in order to evade immigration controls. Most of the Southern states of the U.S. are all too familiar with this problem. It is certainly true of every Western European country.

Any responsible politician must balance the natural wish to be generous to people less fortunate than ourselves against a public duty to maintain a system of immigration control which will sustain racial harmony in our cities. I believe that the United Nations Conventions, with their distinction between the refugee and the non-refugee, provide a fair and impartial means of achieving this.

FRANCIS MAUDE, M.P.
Minister of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
London, England

WILLIAM MCGURN writes:

I am delighted to see that Her Majesty's representative has confirmed the thrust of my article: that Britain's refugee policy is driven by "a public duty to maintain a system of immigration control which will sustain racial harmony in our cities." It is most revealing that there is no reference in Francis Maude's letter to the boat people themselves or to conditions in Vietnam; these questions are not considered relevant to British policy.

Indeed, it is astonishing that so little of substance is said on Britain's behalf here. I suppose it is literally true, for example, that the British did not "invent" the practice of labeling refugees as economic migrants, just as it is literally true that the Germans did not invent concentration camps (a British achievement dating from the Boer War). In the case of the Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong, however, what the British have done is to apply this label on an unprecedented scale and reverse the previous presumption whereby arrivals were treated as refugees until the contrary was proved. Now they

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are guilty until proven innocent, and are, moreover, kept in wretched prison-like conditions.

As for the mechanics of the screening, the Refugee Project of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights has registered a number of complaints: that the UNHCR can monitor only 6 percent of all interviews and only about 10 percent of the appeals; that the interview records are kept only in English (not Vietnamese); that the interviewers do not have enough knowledge of conditions in Vietnam and are not disposed to giving refugees the benefit of the doubt; that refugees do not have lawyers physically present at all their appeals; that no grounds are given with respect to an adverse decision on appeal; that refugees do not have adequate legal counseling before the process; etc., etc.

Mr. Maude cites claims about the Western democracies that are simply not true. For one thing, the line is not as clearly drawn as he implies, and in practice non-refugees are tolerated and generally not returned to situations where they would not be safe. Given the Vietnamese laws against boat departures, the repeated promises by Hanoi to punish those guilty, and the lack of any effective monitoring of those returned to Vietnam, the boat people in Hong Kong have a pretty good claim against forced repatriation even apart from the question of whether they should be granted refugee status. And whatever America's treatment of the Haitians may be, an argument that seeks to justify one's own wrongdoing by reference to another's is not what I would have expected from a Member of Parliament.

It would be one thing for London to argue that, whatever the boat people's claims, Britain has neither the obligation nor the capacity to resettle them on its shores. Instead, the Thatcher government has tried to tar them with the brush of money-grubbing opportunism by calling them economic migrants, a rationale that will soon prove useful in keeping the door closed to British passport-holders in Hong Kong itself. At the same time, the colonial government of Hong Kong helps foment racial antagonism between the Chinese population of that territory and the Vietnamese boat people to make its policy of repatriation more popular. I suggest that anyone who can describe all this as "fair and impartial" probably will go far in British politics.

"Bork Revisited"

To the Editor of Commentary:

In response to Terry Eastland's article, "Bork Revisited" [February], I would first like to point out that *The People Rising: The Campaign Against the Bork Nomination* does indeed include an index. Mr. Eastland's inaccuracy on this point at the beginning of his article sets the tone for an exercise in sophistry and selective fact-gathering that mirrors the so-called bias and heavy-handedness he claims were characteristic of the anti-Bork coalition.

Mr. Eastland is completely uncritical in his praise of Robert H. Bork. He justifies many of Bork's unpopular positions by pointing out the judge's philosophical commitment to original intent, and attributing the failure to win confirmation to a Democratic Senate, an indifferent and beleaguered President, and a group of unscrupulous liberal interest groups who outmaneuvered the Right. Mr. Eastland only grudgingly acknowledges that Bork could have performed more effectively at the Senate hearings, although he qualifies this by justifying Bork's failure to examine these shortcomings in his own book. Mr. Eastland whines, "But such an exercise in self-criticism—what some critics would like is a kind of confession—would be pointless." Self-criticism is obviously a practice Mr. Eastland has an aversion to, and one can see this manifested in his facile ability to hang the responsibility for Bork's ultimate defeat on everyone save Bork himself.

As for Mr. Eastland's insistence that Bork's legal positions are a product of a constitutional scholar dedicated to upholding "the principles intended by those who ratified [the Constitution]"—and, by implication, that *Roe* v. *Wade* is outside the loop of original intent and consequently, as Bork claims, "the greatest example and symbol of judicial usurpation of democratic prerogatives in this century"—I find this disingenuous. For the most part those who are passionately opposed to *Roe* v. *Wade* don't give a damn about originalist thinking or Bork's self-presumed ability to intuit the intentions of Americans who lived over two cen-

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turies ago. They fervently believe abortion is unjust.

By the same token, Mr. Eastland's somber reflections on the damage done to those earnest caretakers of "legitimate judicial power" by the anti-Bork coalitions mask his real resentment: that he and others in the pro-Bork camp experienced what is known as "getting their asses kicked." He wistfully complains that "the Left convened in a 'War Room,' . . . where its leaders watched the proceedings and wrote statements they would then take to the media in time for the network news. No one was doing that for Bork, at least not until the very end of his testimony."

The People Rising points out that the outcome of the battle over the Bork nomination is relevant to future political struggles in the 1990's. The books ends by stating: "We believe the tiger of an American progressive movement is crouched and ready to jump again." If Terry Eastland and his fellow partisans hope to wage their battles successfully in the new decade, I suggest they read and reread *The People Rising* for some pointers.

NEIL ORTENBERG
Thunder's Mouth Press
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . While Judge Bork and Terry Eastland, it appears, are both troubled by the politicizing of the judicial-appointment process, the milieu in which Bork was nominated created that "unwanted" atmosphere. The President and his Attorney General were more explicit: the programs not otherwise accomplished by the Reagan administration would be accomplished by appointments to the Supreme Court.

If the public, the casual observer, or the serious student came to a conclusion that Bork had to pass a political test to achieve the President's nod, then it was certainly Messrs. Reagan, Meese, and Bork who lent credibility to that thought.

As for Senator Kennedy's "Bork's America" speech, that was recognized by anyone truly interested as simply politics as usual. I for one had serious doubts about Bork and the "compassion" that I feel is required of a judge, let alone a Supreme Court Justice. But, beyond compassion, it was simply crude to permit this to evolve into the slogan: "I am against judge-made law." What kind of law is there but judge-made law? I am positive that Bork understands—even if Mr. Eastland cares not to understand—that when King Henry turned to his chancellor and bade him do equity among Henry's subjects, judge-made law was born; it has remained well-nourished over the centuries. Mr. Eastland's point of view is less than candid and Bork ought not to complain of politics. He made his own bed.

MICHAEL COOK
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Terry Eastland is probably right that the Bork hearings were a charade, but wasn't there at least one occasion when a Bork supporter might have broken up the game and perhaps swung the presumably fair and independent-minded Senators Specter and DeConcini away from their later vote of rejection?

I am thinking of the time when Laurence Tribe was testifying. Senator Simpson challenged Tribe's motivations, which evoked the response that if he, Tribe, were a Supreme Court Justice, he would separate his politics from his reading of the Constitution. Simpson nodded and let the response pass. But suppose Simpson had swiftly countered: but Professor Tribe, Judge Bork, under oath, has said precisely the same thing. Why should we believe you, but disbelieve Judge Bork? And why do you, who called Judge Bork an honorable man, impugn his integrity, wittingly or unwittingly?

A similar response by Bork to Senator Leahy's introduction of "confirmation conversion" might also have helped his cause, or at least exposed the Marc Antonys with their "honorable man" bushwah.

BERNARD ADELMAN
Winthrop, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

According to Terry Eastland, Robert H. Bork, in *The Tempting of America,* examines cases in which "various Supreme Courts have read into the Constitution rights . . . that simply are not there." Mr. Eastland asserts that writing personal beliefs into the Constitution "originated in the Supreme Court's 1857 decision in *Dred Scott,* in which it read into the due-process clause of the Fifth Amendment a right to slaveholding." This simply is not so. The right to own slaves was implicit in various places in the original body of the Constitution. The *Dred Scott* decision did not invent the right to own slaves where it had not existed.

In *Dred Scott* the Court stated that slaveowners had the right to take their slaves anywhere into federal territories and that Congress could not set aside any federal territory as an area in which slavery was prohibited, for such would limit the right of a slaveowner to take his property with him. No "right to own slaves" was fabricated by the Court in *Dred Scott.*

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In 1979 Terry Eastland and William J. Bennett published *Counting by Race: Equality from the Founding Fathers to Bakke and Weber.* Chapter 3 of that book is entitled "As I Would Not Be a Slave, So I Would not Be a Master: Lincoln and the Idea of Moral Equality." The first sentence is as follows:

> Professor Harry V. Jaffa has remarked that the "long political duel between Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln was above all a struggle to determine the nature of the opinion which should form the doctrinal foundation of American government."

In the footnote that follows this sentence, Messrs. Eastland and Bennett remark that

> For the discussion of Lincoln that occupies the bulk of this chapter, we depend upon and draw extensively from the historical and philosophical analysis of Lincoln's thought in Harry V. Jaffa's *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates.*

I do not think that Terry Eastland, even today, would deny that in *Counting by Race* he and William J. Bennett had accepted without reservation not only my account of what Lincoln believed to be "the opinion which should form the doctrinal foundation of American government," but had accepted that opinion as their own. According to Messrs. Eastland and Bennett,

> Lincoln's . . . main insight was that the principle of equality [in the Dec-

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laration of Independence] was logically necessary to the idea of self-government. Self-government, by definition, requires the assumption that all men possess free will, that men are morally autonomous, capable of choosing right and wrong . . . and thus for one man to deal with another, because of his race, in ways that deny or diminish his intrinsic worth as a moral agent is to deny the very basis upon which self-government is possible.

The second resolution of the Republican party platform of 1860—upon which Abraham Lincoln was elected President—affirms

> That the maintenance of the principles promulgated in the Declaration of Independence and embodied in the Federal Constitution, "That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," is essential to the preservation of our Republican institutions. . . .

Lincoln himself, speaking in Independence Hall, on his way to his inauguration, said that he had never "had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence" (February 22, 1861).

There cannot be the slightest doubt that for Lincoln and the Republican party of 1860, the principles of the Declaration of Independence were *the* original and originating principles of the Constitution. No question of what was the "original intent" of those who framed and those who ratified the Constitution of 1787 (and the Bill of Rights of 1791) could have been answered in any other way than that it was "to secure these rights," as they were understood within the framework of the Declaration. Moreover, the "just powers" of government were understood to extend only so far as such rights required security by government. "Of all free government," wrote James Madison, "compact [i.e., the social contract] is the basis and essence." The Constitution is a charter of limited government because the social contract which is antecedent to all positive law, and is its basis, limits the scope of government, and directs it toward those purposes that are in accordance with "the laws of nature and of nature's God."

Robert H. Bork has gained great celebrity of late—especially in his new book, *The Tempting of America*—as an exponent of a jurisprudence of "original intent." But Bork's conception of "original intent" is the very negation of Madison's or Lincoln's. In fact, the polemic against the social compact and natural-rights philosophy of the Declaration of Independence which Bork sustains throughout his book parallels exactly that of John C. Calhoun. Since Terry Eastland has become a relentless celebrant of Bork's celebrity, as in "Bork Revisited," we must ask why he has changed sides, in this the most momentous dispute in American—if not in world—history.

Bork unceasingly represents his jurisprudence of "original intent" as one scrupulously based upon the history and text of the Constitution. He finds the "original sin" in constitutional interpretation to be the idea of "substantive due process," the first (and most potent) example of which he finds in Chief Justice Taney's opinion in the *Dred Scott* case (1857). Taney had ruled that Congress might not outlaw slavery in a territory because it would deprive the slaveowner of his property "without due process of law," which was forbidden by the Fifth Amendment.

According to Bork, Taney reached this result by discovering "that slave ownership was a constitutional right." But, says Bork, "there is no . . . constitutional provision that can be read with any semblance of plausibility to confer a right to own slaves."

And again, "Such a right [to own slaves] is nowhere to be found in the Constitution."

In point of fact, however, the right to own slaves is recognized in several places in the Constitution of 1787. In all of them euphemisms are employed, but they are unmistakable. Article I speaks of "the whole number of free persons" and then of "three-fifths of all other persons." Has anyone ever doubted that the "other persons" are unfree, i.e., slaves? Article IV, Section 2, paragraph 3 is, however, crucial for Taney's opinion in *Dred Scott*. It declares that

> No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

So far as I know, no one before Bork, in 200 years, has doubted that this clause constituted recognition of the lawfulness of slavery in the slave states. Not only does the Constitution recognize the right of owners to their slaves, it pledges the whole power of the federal government to secure that right. Who but slaves does Bork think might be "escaping"? . . .

Taney did not read a right to own slaves *into* the Constitution of 1857. It is Bork who has read the right *out* of that Constitution. By his willful denial of the actual text of the Constitution, the entire argument of Bork's book collapses. In 1979, Terry Eastland—unlike Bork—would have been among the first to insist that Taney was mistaken, primarily and essentially, because he wrote that under the Constitution, Negroes "were so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

It was by denying that black men and women were included in the proposition of human equality in the Declaration of Independence, that Taney could regard them as simply an "ordinary article of merchandise and property." The *Dred Scott* decision was wrong because it repudiated the natural-rights foundation of the Constitution in the Declaration of Independence. This foundation Bork denies every bit as much as did Chief Justice Taney.

HARRY V. JAFFA
Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In discussing Robert H. Bork's views on *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*, Terry Eastland praises Bork for pointing out, "as few writers do, that the Connecticut statute [barring contraceptives] had never been enforced and was unlikely ever to be."

In point of fact, in 1940 the Connecticut Supreme Court upheld the prosecution of two physicians and a nurse, employed by the Waterbury Maternal Health Center, for counseling married women in the use of contraceptive devices. . . . Two years later, the court refused to read an exemption into the statute to permit physicians to pre-

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scribe contraceptive drugs or devices for married women whose lives would be jeopardized by pregnancy, pointing out that they had a "reasonable, efficacious, and practicable" alternative—"absolute abstention" from sexual intercourse.

In Connecticut legal and medical circles the memory of these cases was still lively in the 1950's. . . . To be sure, condoms could be freely purchased; . . . diaphragms, however, were something else again. Many law-abiding physicians would not prescribe or fit them; others were sufficiently worried about adverse publicity . . . or even prosecution to engage in what might be called defensive medicine—confining their practice to married women who were regular patients or who moved in the same social circles. . . .

In 1960, another challenge to the constitutionality of the law was mounted by a diverse group of plaintiffs, but when their case (*Poe* v. *Ullman*) reached the Supreme Court, they were informed that they were tilting at "harmless, empty shadows" because there was insufficient evidence that they were threatened with prosecution, and the case was dismissed. A few months after this judicial refusal to pass on the constitutionality of the statute barring contraceptives, Planned Parenthood took the only remaining step available to get the issue resolved: it opened a birth-control clinic in New Haven. In less than a week, the clinic's executive and medical directors were arrested; and it closed three days later. When the defendants, who were found guilty in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*, finally got to the Supreme Court in 1965, it ruled, by a 7-2 vote, that the statute was unconstitutional. . . .

Bork repeatedly denies that the statute was ever enforced against "anyone who used contraceptives, married or not." This is true, but it is not the whole truth. In the *Griswold* case, the trial court found that three patrons of the clinic, though not arrested, had violated the law by using birth-control devices "even though each of these women is married and living with her husband, since the prohibition of the statute against the use of such articles for such a purpose is absolute." . . . Bork also asserts that "the lawyers had a difficult time even getting the state to fine two doctors [actually, only one of the defendants was a doctor] as accessories" in the *Griswold* case. Not so. The clinic opened on November 1, 1961; the objectionable acts occurred on the 6th; and the prosecutor filed his complaint with the court on the 10th.

Mr. Eastland quotes Bork as observing that "the [*Griswold*] litigation was an attempt to enlist the Court on one side of one issue in a cultural struggle." I do not think, however, that either Mr. Eastland or Bork means that the state, which commenced the litigation, was guilty of attempting to subvert the judicial process; both almost certainly intend to direct their accusation at the defendants, who appealed rather than pay their fines. In any event, the "cultural-struggle" point can also be made about the interlopers and malcontents who complained about governmental action in the school-segregation, flag-salute, right-to-die, school-prayer, city-hall-Christmas-crèche, and a host of other cases; but what follows once we acknowledge that the cases reflect cultural rifts in our society?

Finally, Mr. Eastland says that "*Griswold* led, in 1973, to *Roe* v. *Wade*" (true enough), and he then endorses Bork's verdict on *Roe* v. *Wade*—"the greatest example of judicial usurpation of democratic prerogative in this century." In calling for the overturn of this judicial abomination, Bork and Mr. Eastland might have pointed out to their readers that the road from *Griswold* to *Roe* v. *Wade* also runs from *Roe* v. *Wade* back to *Griswold*. Alerted by this topographic insight, the readers might in turn have wondered whether *Roe* v. *Wade* can be demolished without undermining the constitutional foundation for *Griswold*, viz., what Mr. Eastland calls "the dubious right of privacy." Of course, Messrs. Bork and Eastland may believe that the demise of *Griswold* is also a consummation devoutly to be wished, since it would turn control over the legal status of contraception back to the 50 state legislatures, where the Founding Fathers no doubt intended to place it.

BORIS I. BITTKER
Yale Law School
New Haven, Connecticut

TERRY EASTLAND writes:

The People Rising does have an index; my mistake. But still no footnotes, as I originally observed and Neil Ortenberg does not dispute. All of this is small potatoes, of course, compared with what Mr. Ortenburg really wants to say, and there is little point in refighting the Bork battle with him. I would have thought him willing to shake hands with me when I gave the Left credit for its skillful anti-Bork effort, but Mr. Ortenburg is hardly genial. About the rise of the progressive movement, whom is he kidding?

Michael Cook surely must agree that there is statutory law, regulatory law, and even the law of the Constitution. His point about judge-made law, I am afraid, is not very helpful. Obviously there is the common law. But federal judges are not, or at least are not supposed to be, common-law judges. They are supposed to interpret objective legal instruments. It is in this context that the distinction between interpreting and making law remains useful, in the way Bork has pointed out: that in discerning a law's meaning a federal judge should be bound by what the text fairly says or what can reasonably be inferred from it, as opposed to breaking through those restraints and serving up something new, as occurred in *Roe* v. *Wade*. Finally, while federal judges' use of the equity power remains controversial, it is worth noting, even if Mr. Cook does not do so, that this was not the central issue in either the Bork battle or the Bork book.

As for Joseph Forbes and Harry V. Jaffa regarding *Dred Scott*, Chief Justice Taney did read into the due-process clause of the Fifth Amendment a right to slave-owning. Wrote Taney:

> [T]he rights of property are united with the rights of person, and placed on the same ground by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which provides that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, and property, without due process of law. And an act of Congress which deprives a citizen of the United States of his liberty or property, merely because he came himself or brought his property into a particular territory of the United States, and who had committed no offense against the laws, could hardly be dignified with the name of due process of law.

Bork comments in his book that "this was the first appearance in American constitutional law of the concept of 'substantive due process.'" That was Bork's basic point, and the one I had hoped to convey in my article, and I have seen no argument, and am aware

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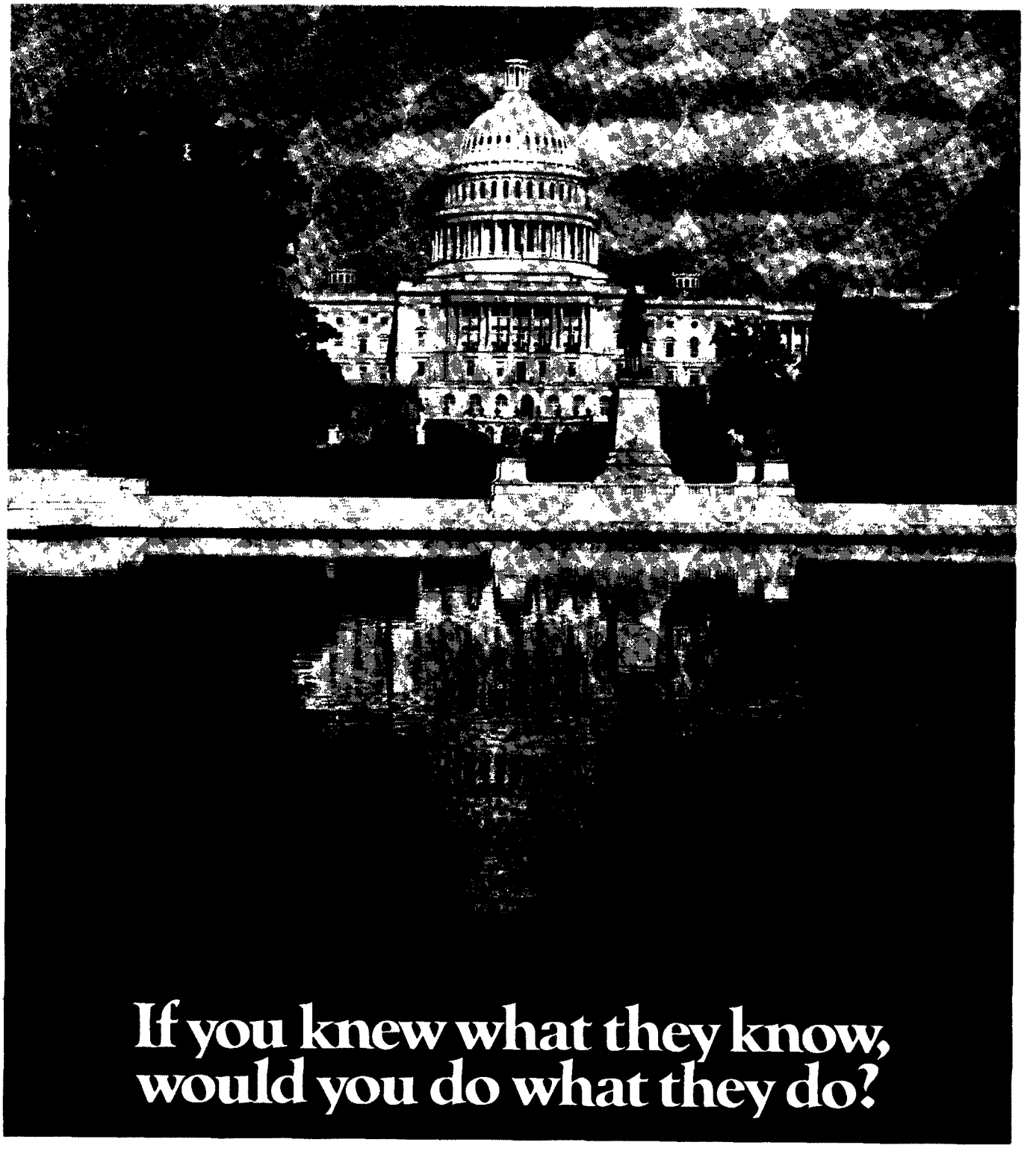

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of no previous Court decision, showing that it is wrong.

To Harry V. Jaffa I would add that I appreciate his mentioning *Counting by Race,* which, alas, was remaindered long ago, and I continue to have the greatest regard for his *Crisis of the House Divided* (although I hesitate to write this for fear that it may be later be used to prosecute me for some heresy!). I fault *Dred Scott* from the standpoint of the Declaration; I also fault it from the standpoint of the Constitution, whose due-process clause does not contain what Taney thought it contained.

Finally, Yale Law Professor Boris I. Bittker speaks authoritatively about pre-*Griswold* history, and I have no reason to quarrel with his account. On his point that "cases reflect cultural rifts in our society," I disagree with such a benign reading of the origins of key litigation in recent years. Some groups preferred to litigate their way to public policy rather than achieve it the old-fashioned way, through legislatures. As for *Griswold* and *Roe,* I think it possible for the Supreme Court to distinguish the latter from the former (though not on originalist grounds) in order to overturn *Roe.* Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the Court, in a 1986 case, *Hardwick* v. *Bowers,* left homosexual sodomy to the 50 state legislatures, where the Founding Fathers did intend to place it.

On the Legalization of Drugs, Round 2

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . After many columns of rambling argumentation, James Q. Wilson in "Against the Legalization of Drugs" [February], states his premise in the next to last paragraph of his article: "Human character is formed by society; indeed, human character is inconceivable without society."

Every argument in the article depends on this premise, which is unprovable because it is undefinable. What is human character? That which is formed by society. What is society? That which forms human character. People sympathetic to Mr. Wilson's view "just know" what human character is and what society is. Others don't count; they're on the wrong side of the war.

Personally, I think my character is formed by me, and society consists of the interactions I choose. Since the responsibility for my life thus falls entirely on me, I wouldn't dream of clouding my mind with poisonous drugs—it's the only one I've got. But if Mr. Wilson is right, and it's not my responsibility but William J. Bennett's, then what the heck, I might as well try just one little snort. . . .

James Sedgwick
Oakland, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

James Q. Wilson's moral distinction between cocaine and nicotine is bizarre. His antiseptic characterization of tobacco, that it (merely) shortens one's life but does not destroy one's "essential humanity," suggests that Mr. Wilson has never comforted an addict through the nervous unravelings of nicotine withdrawal or one devastated by respiratory cancer or its treatments. Cocaine, he says, debases one's life and "alters one's soul." . . .

Let us say we were to legalize cocaine and outlaw tobacco. The mass media would soon be sensationalizing the horrors of cighouses and butt dealers. They would turn their cameras and microphones on the most desperate addicts, creating the illusion that they were typical users, inevitable products of fateful first puffs. . . . Public-affairs reports would treat the public to the most graphic gore of carcinomas, interviews via tracheotomy, inner-city maternity wards bursting with "tar babies," and the inevitable gang mayhem (all the while the Royale Coke Smokes cowboy would be riding satisfied into endless sunsets, trailing a surgeon general's warning, of course). In other words, stack the deck of public perception the other way, and I am sure most people would soon perceive tobacco as dehumanizing and cocaine as merely inadvisable. The morality of drug prohibition is a social fiction manufactured by mass-media managers driven by market shares and by politicians looking for enemies against whom to rail and rally the electorate.

While moralizing about illegal drug use, Mr. Wilson takes a pragmatic view of alcohol and tobacco. He says "nicotine is so widely used as to be beyond the reach of effective prohibition," and about alcohol that "one has to temper any policy by a common-sense judgment of what is possible." But is tolerance of the inebriant that flows at the country club coupled with intolerance of the one that burns in the ghetto "a common-sense judgment" or simply bigotry? . . . It would be refreshing to hear someone in the mass media address the probability that the only reason punitive measures are not proposed against casual alcohol and tobacco consumers is that too many of them are middle-class whites.

Mr. Wilson spends a lot of ink arguing that present heroin-usage levels demonstrate the wisdom of the war against heroin during the 1970's. . . . But even Mr. Wilson must admit that the war on drugs today is fundamentally different in character from the anti-heroin campaign of the 1970's. By adopting the tactics of historical purges and pogroms waged against unpopular minorities, today's drug war has taken on an ominous and menacing character that never was present during the campaigns of the 1970's. . . .

How can a government deal with members of unpopular minorities? Well, "We can take away their assets, their money, their privileges and possessions. Let us take away their fancy homes and cars and jeopardize their professional licenses." Those words belong not to Adolf Hitler, . . . but to Minnesota Attorney General Hubert H. Humphrey III. The Attorney General was speaking to members of the Criminal Justice Institute about drug users. Here in Minnesota, newly enacted legislation empowers the state to confiscate and auction the property of suspected drug users, whether they are convicted or acquitted; whether, in fact, they even go to trial! If the lessons of history are applicable, these steps seem to constitute enabling measures for a narcocide. . . .

Mr. Wilson's accusation that cocaine alters the soul suggests that narcs are not actually law-enforcement officers but exorcists, and that the Drug Enforcement Agency is not a secular administrative agency but a national church. . . . The drug war may be a holy war in the minds of its perpetrators, but to outsiders it has the feel of a new Inquisition. . . .

Kenneth Jopp
St. Paul, Minnesota

To the Editor of Commentary:

Like most discussions of the subject, James Q. Wilson's argument against legalizing drugs overlooks

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the fundamental question, namely, what is the primary legitimate purpose of democratic government? If, as Jefferson maintains, it is to secure its citizens' right to pursue happiness freely without (directly) injuring others, then they should be free to make themselves temporarily happy by taking drugs. Similarly, if, as Locke maintains, it is to protect its citizens' persons and property, these would be far more secure for the majority (who are nonusers) if drugs were legalized.

But if the primary legitimate purpose of democratic government is to promote the material or moral or physical or spiritual welfare of its citizens, then drugs should remain illegal, cigarettes and handguns should become illegal, and alcohol consumption should be carefully controlled. The hairsplitting distinctions Mr. Wilson and others make among them are essentially *ex-post-facto* rationalizations for a status quo that is easier to defend than to change.

A second and related oversight in this otherwise excellent article is its failure to consider the virtual absense of drug use among religiously oriented communities like Orthodox Jews. What distinguishes these communities is their tacit rejection of the natural-rights doctrine on which modern democratic government is based and their concomitant ability to imbue their youth with a sense of purpose in life that centers not on the self and its right to pursue happiness or secure property, but on service to God, benefit to others, and the duty to pursue virtue.

ROMAN A. FOXBRUNNER
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

James Q. Wilson makes a better defense of our national drug policy than does drug czar William J. Bennett. Nonetheless, it is a weak defense. He claims credit for a strategy that succeeded in maintaining zero-growth in heroin use during the last fifteen-plus years, but during that same time, cocaine was supplanting heroin as the users' drug of choice! This would have been a Pyrrhic victory even if there had been a measurable decline in heroin use, let alone a mere holding of the line. . . .

Those of us who favor legalization of drugs are not seeking to raise the "white flag of surrender." Rather, we are trying to focus the nation's batteries on drug abuse, the real enemy. But the war is being led by generals like Mr. Wilson who consider any use of a mind-altering drug (other than alcohol) to be morally unacceptable. In their futile attempts to ban all drug use, they succeed only in making drugs available to anybody who wants them, without regulation and without regard to age. Then we exacerbate the dangers of use by adding criminal sanctions. . . .

Just as Mr. Wilson chose to define the war against drugs as a war against heroin, so does the current leadership wage its war against crack. And already we are reading about the increasing popularity of "ice." A few years ago we were attacking relatively benign cocaine powder, which was replaced by the cheaper and more dangerous crack, and no doubt some of your older readers can remember when marijuana was receiving the same kind of scare publicity that crack now gets. We tend to "buy" this publicity uncritically. For example, the plight of the crack babies makes very effective drug-war propaganda—as though these babies born of miserably poor and malnourished women and girls would have been healthy, bouncing infants absent the demon crack!

Surely, James Q. Wilson, a writer on crime, knows better than to imply that the use of illicit drugs is a significant causative factor in violent crime, other than those daily turf-war murders that are an integral part of a multibillion-dollar market in illegal goods. The crimes that are "caused" by drugs are the crimes of using and selling the drugs—crimes that offend only those to whom the use of psychoactive drugs, other than alcohol, is a "moral issue."

There are some drug-war tactics that are effective, but they would be even more effective under a policy of legalization and regulation. For example, the barrage of publicity about the dangers of drug use does have some beneficent impact. But that publicity would (and should) be continued, let us hope with greater honesty, when drugs are made legal. There are better, more persuasive reasons for steering clear of drug use than simple fear of, or respect for, an arbitrary law. . . .

STAN NAMOVICZ
Takoma Park, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

James Q. Wilson's article seeks to establish the view that increased

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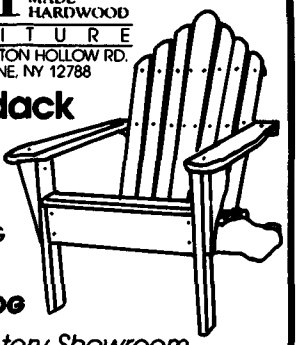
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and vigilant law enforcement effectively contains drug use, abuse, and distribution. . . .

In fact, the history of drug use in the United States proves quite another theorem. The threat of arrest and incarceration does little to discourage use. Instead, illegality turns benign and moderate patterns of use into their opposites, replaces safe routes of administration by riskier ones, encourages experimentation with many drugs or polydrug use, introduces into distribution features which redound to use in malign ways—adulteration of the product, distrust and conflict among distributors, and between them and their clienteles—and draws successively larger increments of innocents into use.

In sum, illegality has brought a lack of regulation to all drug-related behaviors. In particular, the criminalization of heroin in 1914 may be seen as the direct cause of today's crack epidemic. . . .

Heroin was sniffed or taken in pill form for several decades in the United States before it became illegal. For most of a few million users, use was benign, and was encouraged by factory owner and physician alike. When heroin became illegal, users were reduced in number to about half-a-million, but they had become injectors—injecting being a route of administration which gave more "high" for the (now) expensive drug. Injecting invited infection, and made the user more vulnerable to adulterants. In that it also became compulsive, injecting made the user unusually dependent upon distributors, and upon the circumstances of greed, distrust, and conflict in which illegality obliged the latter to operate.

It was primarily as youth-gang members drawn into the quick cash of criminal distribution that the age cohort of users (1964-72) Mr. Wilson discusses became involved with heroin . . . By the end of the decade, heroin use was widespread in minority, inner-city neighborhoods.

It is disheartening to learn that Mr. Wilson refused to discuss the legalization of heroin in 1972. By that date, inner-city youths had become quite fed up with heroin use. Veins had collapsed, bodies had become gaunt and covered with sores, general health was extremely poor, and, in distribution, habits precluded profits. Had heroin been legalized at this time, they still would have been unwilling (or unable, given the condition of veins) to inject. Indeed, many did seek medical care. Upon recuperation, they could have been encouraged by medical personnel to sniff moderate amounts of heroin, or to inhale it in cigarettes. . . .

Tiring of heroin injecting and seeking medical attention in the 1970's, . . . heroin users were very receptive to the newly available, medically-monitored, legal drug, methadone. But they soon discovered that methadone would not give them the "high" its government sponsors had advertised. . . . Users were led next to cocaine, a drug which was being snorted contentedly and without remark by a small, satisfied following. . . . When former heroin injectors or persons maintained on methadone began injecting cocaine, they diffused this practice to cocaine snorters too. The pool of IV drug users was therefore increased.

The enlarged pool of injectors soon began to complain about the adverse effects of cocaine injecting. It "froze" their veins, making them difficult to pierce. Their whole bodies felt "frozen," so that they feared that they were unable to bleed. This dissatisfaction . . . persuaded users to experiment with smoking cocaine. . . .

Arrival at a smokeable form of cocaine now brought that drug to the attention of a much larger population of drug smokers—100 million cigarette smokers, and more especially 45 million marijuana smokers. In 1981, the latter had begun to experience the consequences of intensified enforcement of the laws against their drug of choice. Crop eradication and interdiction had made marijuana scarce, and in South America its cultivators were diverted to coca cultivation.

In the U.S., marijuana distributors, who had often made substantial and extensive reinvestments in local-level, community self-renewal, were harassed by street-level law enforcement, and found themselves hard-pressed to find marijuana to retail in their marijuana-selling locations, the backbone of this community work. Seeking another medium of exchange, they were drawn, very reluctantly and guiltily, into experimentation with the use and distribution of the smokeable cocaine which other law-frustrated drug users had unearthed, as described, and eventually they and their successors, through (criminal) marketing exigencies, brought many millions to crack.

Frustration with crack is currently reintroducing heroin to these many millions, since it affords the crack user a few hours of "nodding out" before the far brisker craving for crack can reassert itself. It may even lead them to ice (smokeable metamphetamine) in the near future. If it does, I expect that a lot of "pill-poppers" . . . may become users. By successively larger increments of population, therefore, illegality will have brought us from the benign use of drugs (which was restricted to a few million, medically supervised users in 1914) to a completely and adversely drug-affected America.

The American experience of alcohol demonstrates clearly that legalization is the context in which good sense in the matter of drugs is expected to prevail. In the fifty years since Prohibition, average per-capita consumption of alcohol has fallen to its lowest level since the discovery of America. . . . In the context of legality, tobacco consumption has also been reduced. . . .

It is frightening to observe how rapidly opponents of legalization resort in the end to ill-founded moral sentiments to strengthen the case of intensified law enforcement. . . . An efficient corrective to this sort of thinking might be an actual meeting with crack users in the low-income minority neighborhoods where crack causes the most trouble. Here Mr. Wilson would discover that crack use is subjected to different degrees of control; and that crack users, human beings with quite unaltered souls, assign very different values to the drug, with corresponding variation in behavioral outcomes. . . . Whole blocks of abandoned buildings and empty or rubbish-strewn lots would give him clues to the contexts of crack use, and to the factors which turn crack against its local users.

The hope of legalization is that these real problems (homelessness, unemployment, destabilized neighborhoods, destroyed families, etc.) will no longer be obscured by scapegoating drugs or drug users' characters; and that a "drug peace dividend" will earmark substantial resources toward their solution.

Ansley Hamid
Department of Anthropology
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
New York City

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I must admit that when I first picked up James Q. Wilson's article, I was ready to ridicule anything he might have to say against legalizing drugs. Not that I am a drug user, but I have always thought that legalization would help more people than it would hurt. Most importantly, it would get drugs out of the schools.

I expected Mr. Wilson's article to be very one-sided, giving only his point of view on the situation, but to my surprise, the article was very fair to the opposing view. Both sides of the argument were given and every point and counter-point was supported with evidence, even though in the end the argument for keeping drugs illegal prevailed. . . .

While reading the article, I kept asking myself, what about alcohol? I have always felt that drugs and alcohol should be treated in the same way, since alcohol causes as many fatalities, if not more, than drugs. Yet even as I was asking myself the question, I turned the page and Mr. Wilson surprised me again. . . . His section on alcohol answered all my arguments and gave good reasons why they were not the right ones. . . .

On a few points I still disagree with James Q. Wilson. As a criminal-justice major, I still believe that legalization might save money and might save some lives by eliminating drug-pushers. But the article has basically changed my mind on this topic, and I hope many others' minds have also been changed. . . .

E. J. MAZZEI

Winona, Minnesota

JAMES Q. WILSON writes:

James Sedgwick is not only a libertarian, he is a mightily confused one: "I think my character is formed by me, and society consists of the interactions I choose." I hope he will tell us what "interactions" he "chose" when he was two years old and explain to us how society is formed by those choices. Meanwhile, please read Aristotle before you write another line.

Kenneth Jopp thinks the only difference between nicotine and cocaine is that we have waged propaganda against cocaine and protected nicotine in the country clubs. He thus reveals that he is a lousy chemist; if any dean of a medical school reads this, please don't admit Mr. Jopp as a student. (To describe the current anti-drug effort as a "pogrom" suggests that he isn't much of a historian, either.)

Stan Namovicz accuses me of having taken credit for stopping heroin; I did nothing of the kind. When he turns to crack, he puts its awful effects down to scare publicity. Babies born to crack mothers would have been miserable even without the cocaine in their placentas. Oh? I hope the medical-school dean also keeps an eye out for this fellow.

Roman A. Foxbrunner wants consistency at any expense. I want consistency—up to a point. I have no real quarrel with him, however; I just hope he and Mr. Jopp can get together to talk over the advantages of banning cigarettes.

Ansley Hamid blames drug abuse on the fact that drugs are illegal. If they weren't, there would be less abuse. How does he know this? Because we had less before 1914. I only wish he had bothered to list *all* of the ways the world has changed since 1914 (another unpromising recruit for a history department). But I think his real agenda is revealed, not by his truncated history, but by the sentences in which he sketches the benign statesmanship of drug dealers. In case the reader missed them, let me quote:

> [M]arijuana distributors, who had often made substantial and extensive reinvestments in local-level, community self-renewal, were harassed by street-level law enforcement, and found themselves hard-pressed to find marijuana to retail in their marijuana-selling locations, the backbone of this community work. Seeking another medium of exchange, they were drawn, very reluctantly and guiltily, into experimentation with the use and distribution of . . . smokeable cocaine.

If chemistry and history have been mishandled by my correspondents, anthropology has been stood on its head. A drug dealer is a latter-day Jane Addams or Saul Alinsky, eagerly promoting community renewal while reluctantly agreeing to sell cocaine just to keep his charitable activities alive? I am speechless.

Finally, I would like to thank E.J. Mazzei for his generous letter. To have changed one person's mind through the agency of prose is a rare honor indeed.

The Dual Torah

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Alter's truly splendid article, "Interpreting the Bible" [March], contains a somewhat puzzling, though offhand, statement: "Jews always conceived this corpus as a textual object complete in itself. . . ." If that statement refers to public opinion past and present, it is difficult to verify, but highly unlikely, since . . . Judaism was explicit that the Hebrew Scriptures were incomplete on their own. If Mr. Alter means then to refer to a Judaism—a religious system resting on the Pentateuch comprising a world view, way of life, and theory of a social entity called an "Israel," all recapitulating a specified canon, then he is of course right for Karaism, and perhaps for some elements of Reform Judaism, too. But he is simply wrong for rabbinic (a.k.a. normative, classical, talmudic, authentic, or Torah-true) Judaism—the Judaism of the dual Torah. That Judaism that we affirm is represented by not only Tanakh ("a textual object complete in itself," in Mr. Alter's context) but also Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmud, all part of the Torah. The "textual object" is then completed by another corpus altogether, the oral Torah.

Mr. Alter is factually wrong, also, when he claims that Judaism, meaning the Judaism of the dual Torah, ever read the written part of the Torah to address "the life of a people in real historical time." If by "real historical time" he means to claim that the Judaism of the dual Torah read, for example, Genesis as the story only of people long ago, then that is false. The Midrash of Genesis Rabbah, the one authoritative reading of Genesis that the Judaism of the dual Torah put forth in its formative age, is explicit to the contrary. Genesis Rabbah reads the book of Genesis as an account of the life of Israel not only then, long ago, but also now, in the "now" of its authorship. Episodes of Genesis refer not to the history of the Israel alive in that distant age, but—typologically, parabolically, and allegorically, all three types of hermeneutics being present in the compilation—to that present age in which the authors and compilers of Genesis Rabbah lived. Mr. Alter is, of course, correct in saying that that Judaism did not read Scripture in relationship to another group of books composed in a different language. But Gen-

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esis is read as a very immediate account of the age in which 3rd- and 4th-century C.E. Israel was living, and the entire structure of the Judaism that they were shaping is read into the household *Märchen* [tales] that make up most of the book of Genesis. "Then" and "now" form a single continuum, and the distinction between the "then" of "real historical time" and the "now" of ourselves and our lives is utterly alien to the Judaism for which Genesis Rabbah speaks. . . .

These misimpressions of Mr. Alter's in no way affect his compelling argument about the Jewish Publication Society's Torah commentaries, their strengths and weaknesses, and I certainly concur, in particular, on his high estimate of the brilliant work of Baruch Levine on Leviticus, which has simply redefined the standard of excellence when it comes to commentary on Scripture. Mr. Alter's own literary reading, moreover, in this article as in his several books, forms on its own a major corpus of scriptural interpretation; all the more reason to make certain that, in minor details, an accurate account of Judaism finds its place.

JACOB NEUSNER
Institute for Advanced Study
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In his criticism of Jacob Milgrom's commentary on Numbers, . . . Robert Alter contends that in 1 Samuel 15, the narrative about Samuel and Agag the Amalekite, the biblical narrator develops a "rich tension of internal oppositions in the characterization," and that Milgrom's attempt to understand this story as part of a Davidic, anti-Saul *Tendenz* is "questionable in the extreme." Mr. Alter's grammatical proof is the shift in verbs indicating Saul's sin between the singular and the plural. Especially significant from Mr. Alter's perspective is Verse 9, which he translates: "And Saul and the people [or, troops] spared Agag. . . ." In what he calls "a nicety of biblical grammar," he notes that "The verb 'spared' is in the singular in Hebrew, despite the plural subject, in conformity with a general biblical usage that allows a singular verb when one of the elements of a compound subject is considered the primary actor, the others somehow subsidiary." This "rule" is incorrect, however; rather, when a verb is followed by a compound subject one of whose elements is a singular, the verb is often in the singular, irrespective of who is considered the "primary actor." Thus, the use of the singular verb here is a standard feature of Hebrew grammar, and tells us nothing about the author's perspective or his characterization.

I fail to understand why Mr. Alter downplays the ideological nature of biblical historical texts. It is quite accepted that all history-writing is done within an ideological framework, either consciously or subconsciously; why should the Bible be exempt? It is evident from the narratives and from the polemics in the Bible itself that there were different camps within Israel; some favored the dynasty of Saul, others supported the dynasty of David, while others backed various dynasties within the Northern Kingdom. We should expect these positions to be advocated in the various texts which deal with kings, and Milgrom is quite reasonable in doing so. Certainly the Bible does contain belletristic elements, as Mr. Alter (over-)emphasizes, but it also shares certain elements with the genre of historiography, including ideological bias. These become evident as we explore the Bible within its ancient historical context rather than viewing it within the framework of the New Criticism, which tends to decontextualize works. It is especially frustrating that Mr. Alter fails adequately to consider these ancient (ideological) contexts since in his recent book, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age,* he notes that "The neglect of history . . . is one of the principal weaknesses of contemporary criticism."

Finally, Mr. Alter's approach to the Samuel material is not original, as his lack of footnotes might imply. An approach that similarly argues for the complexity and ambiguity of the Bible's portrayal of Saul is in David Gunn's *The Fate of King Saul: An Interpretation of a Biblical Story* (1980). This is an important work (which is also not cited in Mr. Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative*), and he should have drawn the reader's attention to it.

In sum, biblical scholarship is clearly becoming more and more complex as it frees itself from the discipline of theology. Perspectives from the humanities, including literary criticism of all types, and from the social sciences, have contributed and will continue to contribute to the world of biblical scholarship. Biblical scholars using these perspectives who want to make sure that they are not abusing them frequently consult their colleagues in other areas. I certainly hope that Robert Alter, and other scholars coming from outside of biblical studies, will similarly consult biblical scholars to be sure that they are being fair to the general canons of biblical scholarship. This will prevent them from making simple factual errors. . . . More significantly, these scholars from outside biblical studies must not continue to present biblical scholars as a group of bad readers of texts who all have tin ears. The time has come for serious collaboration between biblical scholars and scholars from the humanities and the social sciences. Then we will begin to see balanced, interesting, and important studies of the Bible.

MARC BRETTLER
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One of Robert Alter's remarks struck a familiar chord with me. Mr. Alter objects to translating the "mysterious term" *'orot teḥashim* as dolphin skins in the recent Jewish Publication Society Pentateuch. "Where would they have gotten hold of those in the Sinai?" he asks. As a leather chemist I can assure Mr. Alter that dolphin skins are not suitable for tanning. The translation "porpoise," synonymous with dolphin, turns up in the New English Bible and other versions such as the American Standard Bible and was apparently borrowed by JPS translators from one of these sources. Shortly after the first volume of the JPS Bible was published, I implored the editor-in-chief to return in future editions to the time-honored translation, "sea cow" or "dugong" (a relative of Florida's manatee), which once roamed the littoral of the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea, but was hunted to near extinction in historic times. The dugong gave rise to the Greek myth of the sirens who almost succeeded in seducing Odysseus and his oarsmen. Dugong hides are still being tanned in India with vegetable juices and make excellent leather. We can assume that even in the

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Sinai shrubs suitable for tanning grew which imparted an "orange-yellow" color to hides and skins.

LUDWIG SELIGSBERGER
Newton, Massachusetts

ROBERT ALTER writes:

I thank Jacob Neusner for his kind comments on my essay, and I have no quarrel with what he says about the relation of rabbinic Judaism to the Bible. My observation about conceiving the Bible as "a textual object complete in itself," though perhaps inadvertently overstated, was meant to draw a contrast with the Christian notion that saw Hebrew Scripture as an Old Testament superseded by the New and hence reduced to a series of typological anticipations of the New. Rabbinic Judaism, as Mr. Neusner rightly reminds us, had its own typologies, but these never involved this sort of reduction, and *never claimed superior canonical status* for the later body of texts. Mr. Neusner's happy formulation, "not only then, long ago, but also now," points up this difference from Christianity in another way. For Jews, what happened then was deeply involved in a continuous medium of history, as is the recurrence of the pattern now. From the Christian viewpoint, what happened then was chiefly in order to provide an adumbration of now, and the now itself is imagined as the eleventh hour before the end of history, when the kingdom comes.

Much of Marc Brettler's letter is either ill-considered or badly confused. He states a principle of biblical grammar on the authority of his own pronouncement without offering any evidence to support it. In fact, there are numerous instances in which the use of a singular verb with a compound subject focuses attention on the primary actor. The most famous of these, recognized long ago by the medieval Hebrew exegetes, is the beginning of the account of Korah's rebellion: "And Korah son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi took [singular verb], and Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab and On son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben" (Numbers 16:1).

No serious literary scholar imagines that literature—what Mr. Brettler, in a quaint locution of condescension, calls belles-lettres—is "exempt" from ideology. It goes without saying that biblical literature is intricately involved in its ideological contexts and is repeatedly called on to serve ideological ends. It is also true, as I argued in *The Pleasures of Reading*, that the relation of literature to the regnant ideology of its age very often proves to be unpredictable, double-edged, at times even surprisingly subversive. All this would appear to be beyond Mr. Brettler's purview. What I mainly objected to in Jacob Milgrom's reading was the pseudo-scientific assumption that the ideological or institutional background is necessarily the decisive element in determining the meaning of the text, the automatic key to all its secrets. In the case of the Bible, moreover, such backgrounds, as I indicated, are often only the constructs of scholarly conjecture.

I am astounded that Mr. Brettler should attribute to me a claim to originality in my reading of the Samuel episode, which begins by avowing a debt to the splendid analysis of Meir Sternberg. David Gunn's book appeared just a year before the publication of my *The Art of Biblical Narrative* in the spring of 1981—too late to be cited. Had Mr. Brettler bothered to glance at the table of contents of the 1987 volume I co-edited, *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, he might have reasonably inferred my admiration for the work of David Gunn from the fact that I invited him—it was one of the first invitations I extended for the project—to write the essay on Joshua and Judges. Finally, a call for a collaboration between literary and historical scholars was precisely the note on which my article ended.

I want to thank Ludwig Seligsberger for the intriguing information he has provided.

Bilingual Education

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Bilingual Miseducation" [February], Abigail Thernstrom conducts a rather misleading discussion of both the aims and end results of bilingual education. Mrs. Thernstrom claims the philosophy behind bilingual education is to allow the Hispanic minority in the U.S. to assert and preserve its cultural differences, thereby signaling the end of the American melting pot. In her view, bilingual education is a new approach, aimed at preserving the cultural differences of America's minority groups.

Mrs. Thernstrom's approach offers a very narrow concept of "culture" as something intrinsically associated with language and national origin. American culture, however, is not necessarily the opposite of Spanish culture; I should know, since I have lived sixteen years of my life in Spain and six in the United States. They are both part of the same cultural tradition that starts with Aristotle, continues with St. Augustine, is passed on to Descartes through Averroes, and ends in Burke, Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx.

I probably speak louder than Mrs. Thernstrom does, move my hands frantically when I talk, and cook with olive oil while she cooks with margarine, but that doesn't make me her cultural antithesis. The difference is one of degree, not of kind. Bilingual education is not necessarily aimed at the erosion of one shared "American" historical and cultural tradition, as Mrs. Thernstrom seems to believe. Tradition can be transmitted in one, two, or even three languages at the same time. If you don't believe me, look at the Swiss.

Mrs. Thernstrom is equally misleading in her discussion of the end results of bilingual education. When she claims that graduates of bilingual-education programs are inadequately educated (which is true), she jumps to the conclusion that this is so precisely because they have received a bilingual education. But the truth of the matter is that graduates of bilingual education are inadequately educated just like every other graduate who has gone through an inefficient public-school system in the inner-city ghettos where most Hispanics and blacks live. Moreover, one could claim that a large majority of *all* American high-school graduates are ill-educated, at least judging by what the companies that are going to hire them would like them to know. Thus, when Mrs. Thernstrom says that Motorola is paying $30 million a year to teach its employees to speak, read, and write in English, she has actually hit the crux of the matter. (Note that she does not say "its bilingual employees," but simply "its employees," since the connection is not between bilingual education and miseducation, but between today's education standards in U.S. public schools and miseducation.)

Behind her discussion of bilingual education there are a number of important questions which remain unanswered, particularly the

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question of the role of schools in our society. I completely agree with Mrs. Thernstrom that schools should serve as an integrating mechanism. They must teach a child about the culture of which he is part, Western culture in this case, and also transmit a number of national values and beliefs which are essential for the maintenance of national unity. However, this can be done in Spanish as well as English, and it actually should be done in both languages, with competent bilingual teachers who are not obsessed with minute national idiosyncrasies.

The problems posed for the American educational system by continuing waves of Hispanic immigrants are enormous, yet we are witnessing the emergence of a new America with an enriched cultural tradition, if the Hispanic element is harmoniously incorporated. We need not lose our traditional values and beliefs, our sense of identity, and our most deeply cherished national myths. Americans will still have the same dreams, only they will dream more often in Spanish, and when they wake up they will use olive oil to cook their eggs.

ALVARO TAFUR
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

A few years ago, I was a guidance counselor in a New York City intermediate school. One of my responsibilities was to assign new students to their proper class. A twelve-year-old came into my office with his two older brothers, ages seventeen and eighteen. It was almost impossible to communicate with the twelve-year-old, his English was so rudimentary. I asked the older boys, who spoke almost perfect, unaccented English, where the family came from. "Honduras," they informed me. And how long had they been in this country? "Five years." Why did they leave their younger brother behind? was my next question. "Oh, but he came with us." "Then why is his speech so poor when you both speak so well?" "Oh," they explained, "he has been only in bilingual classes and we have not."

The tragedy of this case is compounded by the fact that younger children pick up a foreign language more readily than older ones. My twelve-year-old may never learn to speak our language. He may have gone on to a bilingual program in high school and even to a bilingual program at a city college. What a waste!

COLEMAN MISHKOFF
New Rochelle, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In reference to Abigail Thernstrom's indictment of bilingual education, which unfortunately is correct, I wanted to call your attention to a ten-year demonstration of successful bilingual education at a Navaho school in Rough Rock, Arizona. The school was led by Benjamin Barney, who resigned this last year, feeling that someone else could carry on. The school went from first to twelfth grade. Each class was taught in both languages. Its success was attested by the excellent colleges which accepted its graduates.

As far as I know this is the only successful bilingual school in the world.

HANS R. HUESSY
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont

ABIGAIL THERNSTROM writes:

Alvaro Tafur would stress the common culture that Americans and Spaniards share. So would I. Unfortunately, however, many bilingual advocates label that shared European culture ethnocentric—part of the system of oppression—and insist on the distinctiveness of Hispanic children and the importance of maintaining their separate cultural identity.

It is also true that too many urban school systems serve *all* children badly—whatever their color or national origin. But my point was that bilingual programs make bad education worse. American students need to learn English; too many bilingual programs do not teach it to them. Coleman Mishkoff beautifully makes this point for me.

I was delighted to learn from Hans R. Huessy of the success of the bilingual program at the Navaho school in Rough Rock, Arizona. Bilingual education is not a disaster everywhere, as I tried to make clear. Some programs are better than others, and some teachers—against the odds—manage to provide good education, but too often they have to be obstinate rebels to do so.

Abba Hillel Silver

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have recently come upon David G. Dalin's review of *Abba Hillel Silver* by Marc Lee Raphael [Books in Review, January] and I am appalled by the description of Rabbi Silver.

For five years—from 1945 to 1953—I served as Abba Hillel Silver's secretary. On the basis of this experience, I find the statement that he had "a strong distaste for the pastoral work, and that there were complaints about his congregation and his rabbinic vocation" far from true. Rabbi Silver never neglected his pastoral responsibilities and in the city of Cleveland enjoyed the respect and admiration of many non-Jews, who regularly attended his weekly sermons. For the most part his congregation idolized him. His wife, Virginia, not even mentioned in the review, was a most tactful woman, able to bring her husband down to earth when he occasionally became overbearing. . . . For myself, I never heard a harsh word from him, nor did he ever raise his voice to me. . . .

Even allowing for my personal identification with this most distinguished man, the author's comments give a most inaccurate picture of Abba Hillel Silver.

ELIZABETH RICE CARSON
Gainesville, Florida

DAVID G. DALIN writes:

The quotation in my review to which Mrs. Carson objects—that Abba Hillel Silver had "a strong distaste for the pastoral work"—was not my statement but that of the book's author, Marc Lee Raphael, on page 212.

The Holocaust

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his instructive and penetrating article, "Power, Powerlessness & the Jews" [January], . . . David Vital points out that almost forty-five years have elapsed since the Holocaust, yet there has been no "sea-change in the ethos and mores of the Jewish people as a whole." Many Jews "think of the Holocaust as an archetype," he writes, but the Holocaust is not an expression of the Jewish exilic condition. Even the long war conducted against Judaism is not of a class with the Crusades, or with other massacres, decimation, slaughter. Wearied by the catastrophe of Auschwitz, their intellectual defenses down and their energies sapped, Jews resist devising new haggadic answers. Nevertheless, the questions remain. How did it happen that defenses

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against murder were lowered? Why cannot the Holocaust be described as the archetypal event of Jewish history? Why are the Jews not archetypal victims? Above all, why is the Holocaust not simply another instance of "the all-too-numerous horrors which humankind has inflicted on itself"?

While it is true that the Jews were the prime target of the Nazi extermination process, it is obvious that a major program of general human extermination was in the cards, as the creation of the six death factories in Poland attests, if only because of their immense capacity and the haste with which the exterminators worked. The Poles, for one, knew that after the Jews it would be their turn. The first exterminations in Germany . . . in a euthanasia project known as Aktion T4—in which Jews, to all intents and purposes, did not figure—ran aground because the principled world . . . would not tolerate such a thing. But as one door closed, another opened: in the East the extermination of peoples began and continued without significant protest or interruption, not only because a war was going on but because Jews were made to seem the exclusive target, as, indeed, for the moment they were.

The Germans correctly estimated that if the general perception was that Jews were not merely the first but the only focus, the massive universal extermination, unprecedented in recorded history, could proceed more or less smoothly. Whereas Hitler had given written sanction for the euthanasia program to proceed, . . . he was careful not to make this mistake the second time around, knowing that in any case his personal authority was not necessary to get it going.

In this light the archetype theory is plainly untenable. Far from being archetypal scapegoats, Jews became a rationale for an assault upon mankind; over their dead bodies there would be established a new order whose functional reality or way of life meant the steady elimination of human beings. In his biography, Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz, undertook to demonstrate how it was possible to create a humane world while putting millions to death. Others felt they could murder on a large scale, and remain "decent." . . . For these there existed no historical parallel, even in societies based upon human sacrifice. . . .

Thus, far from being an expression of the Jewish exilic condition, a manifestation of sporadic or recurrent persecution, or of a general human misfortune, the Holocaust represents a successful breakthrough of counter-human forces into the principled world . . . made possible by way of the distorting theological eyeglass through which Jews were viewed. Under the circumstances, it is understandable that Jews at this stage resist a deep Jewish reappraisal.

But if they ignore a wider need, for the world at large, who will draw attention to the loophole through which catastrophe came to the principled world, and could come again?

NIEL HIRSCHSON
Johannesburg, South Africa

DAVID VITAL writes:

It is difficult not to sympathize with Niel Hirschson in his search for a historico-philosophical context into which the Holocaust may be placed and its underlying significance identified—a broader context than one pertaining essentially, let alone exclusively, to the Jews.

But I do not really believe that he will succeed; and, to be perfectly frank, my concern with what the Jews themselves are making (or failing to make) of it far outweighs my interest in what evidently draws his attention. It may be a parochial position to adopt, but what I feel most strongly in this connection is that the first intellectual duty of those who are prepared to identify themselves with the Jewish people is to put *their own* moral and historiographical house in order before going on to other, ostensibly greater, in fact vastly less trying, matters.

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The Shape of Things to Come

Edward N. Luttwak

For more than forty years, the affairs of the world have been greatly troubled but also structured by the Soviet-Western antagonism. It was their fear of Soviet military strength that eventually induced Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and Chinese to join in a grand coalition with many lesser partners from Morocco to Korea; and it was their striving for the best-paying alignment between Moscow and Washington that shaped the foreign policies of the countries that called themselves nonaligned.

With the Soviet-Western antagonism now rapidly waning, the web of intersecting relations that we call "world politics" is therefore in a fluid state for the first time in two generations. New patterns have yet to emerge, but the old are already in dissolution: the grand coalition of Americans, Europeans, Japanese, and Chinese is no longer powerfully sustained against all divisive tendencies by a unifying threat; the Soviet Union has lost its European satellites and is seemingly abandoning its non-European clients (Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, Laos, Vietnam—though not adjacent Afghanistan and Mongolia); and the tension between Washington and Moscow is now much too weak to offer any reward to those who would align themselves between the two for their own advantage.

Even as we rejoice in the hard-won victory over the successive forms of Soviet aggrandizement, however, we must strive to discern the shape of things to come. Mere curiosity would be reason enough to do so, but for the United States specifically there is a more pressing motive as well.

If we abstain from prediction, proclaiming instead that the only certainty is uncertainty, we are left no alternative but to continue upholding the grand coalition (the policy of the Bush administration so far). That may indeed be the wisest course, but it should be recognized for what it is: not the policy of prudent continuity it superficially seems, but actually a bold attempt to resist the entire logic of strategy. Bold policies can often be right, and prudent policies can often be wrong. But whichever is favored, we should not be deceived by appearances into confusing one with the other, then to walk in tranquility on the high wire thinking it the most solid of paths.

Thus, with the waning of the Soviet-American conflict, we now have to ask ourselves what are likely to be the new antagonisms that could shape world politics through the end of the millennium and beyond. More specifically, we have to look at four large possibilities:

First, will the Soviet-Western antagonism be replaced by North-South confrontations?

Second, will the Soviet-Western antagonism be replaced by the worse alternative of an "internalization" of conflict, with newly released animosities fragmenting the grand coalition of Americans, East Asians, and Europeans, even as ethnic strife is already dividing the Soviet Union?

Third, can we expect a revival, perhaps in a new form, of the Soviet-Western antagonism?

And fourth, is there a new source of conflict emerging in dialectical fashion from the triumph of democratic capitalism over Marxist-Leninism?

North-South Conflict?

The North-South alternative has long been the subject of speculation, if only because it has long been fervently advocated by a few rogue leaders (notably Libya's Qaddafi), and by many more Third-Worldist academics and publicists bent on punishing richer (and mostly whiter) countries for all the deep humiliations of underdevelopment.

Demographic tensions, cultural collisions, and economic resentments—between Latin America and the United States, between North Africa (together with the Middle East) and Western Europe, and now between Russians and Central Asians—lend plausibility to this straightforward substitute for the Soviet-Western antagonism that would simply rotate the front lines of hostility by 90 degrees. And because for all Europeans—Russians very much included—the adjacent South is largely Islamic, the 90-degree solution is that much more plausible, given the exasperated rejection of Western cultural penetrations by many Muslims, and the violent extremism of some.

Edward N. Luttwak, who contributed "Gorbachev's Strategy, and Ours" to our July 1989 issue, holds the Arleigh Burke Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C. His books include *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union, The Pentagon and the Art of War,* and, most recently, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace.*

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No such fundamental cultural clash adds to inter-American quarrels over illegal migrants, illegal narcotics, and the impeccably legal burden of indebtedness. Yet even the least weighty of these issues, the flow of illegal narcotics, can provoke extreme reactions in the American "North."

To be sure, these inter-American quarrels are as nothing when compared to the North-South problems that have already surfaced elsewhere. Europeans looking South confront the sinister novelty of the chemical agents, ballistic missiles, and nuclear ventures of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Saudi Arabia. The actual capacities of these countries for mass destruction at long range amount only to a modest threat as yet, but they are already setting a lower limit on the possible extent of European disarmament. A denuclearized and substantially demilitarized Europe could hardly coexist safely with heavily armed powers just across the Mediterranean, some equipped with long-range missiles.

These novel anxieties add a sharp edge of danger to the intensifying cultural tension between a Europe liberal and pluralistic as never before, and the Islamic countries to the South, whose increasing intolerance is advertised throughout Europe by frequent incidents.

Violence on a larger scale is present wherever Islam meets non-Islam, from distant Kashmir and inaccessible Azerbaijan to Kossovo, an hour's drive from familiar Adriatic resorts; inside Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt (where the Copts in their millions are the victims); in faraway southern Sudan, Nigeria, and Chad, and as close to home as Yorkshire's Bradford and Paris's Belleville. Themselves often the victims of intolerance, the millions of Muslim immigrants in Western Europe also add a cultural dimension to the broader fears of a demographic conquest of the childless North by the prolific South.

For the Europeans of the Soviet Union, all these concerns are even more pressing. In total population, the Slavs still have a vast predominance, with some 199 million Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians out of a total Soviet population of 286 million which also includes non-Russian but also non-Islamic populations. But the imbalance in birth rates is extreme, and in the twenty-year-and-below age cohorts, the Muslim proportion is already 20-25 percent. Moreover, most of the recent outbreaks of violence in the Caucasus and Central Asia have had an Islamic cast.

YET when all these causes of North-South hostility are duly listed and soberly weighed, one still remains with what amounts to a congeries of irritating interpenetrations and some isolated threats rather than anything resembling a confrontation of opposing forces.

For one thing, while the North is rather cohesive and could easily become more so, there is no cohesion at all in the South—certainly not across the entire arc from Latin America to Central Asia, and notoriously not even within the Arab world.

Second, to start a confrontation, both means and motives must be on the same side, but in this case, the North has the military means but lacks the motives, while regardless of possible motives the South lacks the means. Much has been said in recent years of the "diffusion of military power," and it is certainly true that there are now powerful weapons in many hands, including advanced combat aircraft by the hundreds and tanks by the thousands in each one of several "Southern" countries, as well as anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles in two dozen more.

Yet the wars of recent years show that the availability of military equipment for the countries of the South is greater than their supply of trained operators; that their supply of trained operators is greater than their ability to provide satisfactory maintenance; that their ability to field units properly operated and properly maintained is greater than their supply of competent tactical leaders for them; and that their ability to field units properly operated, maintained, and led is greater than their ability to provide effective operational command for them.

Hence for the countries of the South the potential combat value of their military equipment remains very low. The one exception is the encapsulated bombardment capacity of long-range missiles that require no supporting forces and only modest technical skills for their operation—and that very specific and very narrow danger may yet evoke an equally specific response.

There is also a third and decisive reason for rejecting the North-South conflict as a likely replacement for the waning East-West struggle: with a few, notorious exceptions, the countries of the South are ruled by leaders who see personal, factional, and national advantage in the upkeep of cooperative relations with the North, and who are often enough personally dependent on their access to the venues, facilities, and products of the North even when they do not share in its culture—as many of them do.

"Internalization"

THE second alternative to the Soviet-Western antagonism does not carry with it the risk of general nuclear war. But that is its only merit, for the internalization of conflict would replace one confrontation with many by fragmenting the coalitions, blocs, formal alliances, and solidarities created by the cold war.

Little is left of the former Soviet bloc, and the fractures in the Western coalition are becoming wider. With China already almost out, the coalition's weakest link is now between the United States and Japan.

Relations with Gorbachev's Soviet Union had barely begun to improve when opinion polls

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started to register a sharp rise in anti-Japanese feeling in the United States, a trend matched by a similar shift in Japanese opinions of Americans and their ways.

Characteristically, Japanese criticisms are rather homogeneous: Americans are lazy, undisciplined, self-indulgent (if also generous)—and their rude demands for an open, high-consumption Japanese economy would inflict some of those vices on the Japanese. It is also generally believed in Japan that the black and Latin American quotient in the U.S. population degrades overall productivity.

U.S. attitudes, by contrast, differ greatly between popular and elite views, and also show much regional variance, but the trends all go the same way: the Japanese are increasingly seen as ruthless and unfair economic competitors who export not to import in turn but rather to accumulate the funds with which they buy banks, companies, factories, and property in the United States, as well as Treasury bonds.

At the popular level, Americans fear that they will be turned into Japan's helots, working under Japanese managers in Japanese-owned companies, paying rent to Japanese landlords, and paying taxes to Japan by way of interest on that country's large holdings of the U.S. national debt. These are not fantasies but merely overstated realities, accompanied by anticipatory exaggerations.

At the elite level, the faith of most of the highly educated in traditional free-trade economics, their admiration for Japanese business skills (and also no doubt the influence of Japan's many exponents in U.S. academic and policy circles), once served to shape a quite different view, notably that Japanese competition would stimulate U.S. industry to become more efficient, while in the meantime providing consumers with highly desirable products at moderate cost. Also widely accepted until recently was the textbook explanation for the increase of the Japanese trade surplus from 1980 onward, i.e., that the dollar-yen rate was much too high. Finally, the macroeconomic explanation was also known to many in the elite: that the excess of U.S. imports over U.S. exports was the inevitable counterpart of the excess demand generated by the federal deficit and private borrowing, and that Japanese purchases of U.S. property and U.S. securities were the only possible compensation for the trade imbalance.

More recently, however, a less benign view has become increasingly prevalent at the elite level as well. First, when the huge 1985-86 devaluation failed to diminish significantly the trade deficit with Japan even as it drastically reduced the parallel deficit with the European Community, the longstanding claims of frustrated exporters that Japan was guilty of disguised protectionism were recalled, repeated, and widely believed for the first time.

Second, elite views have been transformed by the rather belated discovery that Japanese policies assiduously protect the producer interest (by one-sided import barriers if need be) for the sake of full employment and the accumulation of capital, while U.S. policies mainly promote the consumption of ever-more and ever-better goods regardless of origin, which results in the accumulation of debt. Because U.S. priorities are regarded as normal by Americans, Japanese wealth-and-work priorities are seen as predatory.

Finally, elite opinion has also belatedly discovered the remarkable extent of Japanese lobbying in Washington, and the vast sums of money that Japanese interests pay to influential political lawyers, ex-government officials who pronounce on trade matters, Japan specialists in U.S. academia, and authoritative institutions that have a say in policies that affect Japan. In a typical prelude to an anticipated confrontation, newspapers and magazines have been publishing articles that consist almost entirely of lists of individuals and institutions that have been receiving money from Japan. Similarities with the listings of suspected Soviet sympathizers in the ranks of the U.S. government and in important private institutions during 1946-48 (i.e., before the struggle with the Soviet Union became overt) are not accidental.

It may seem that the rising American hostility to Japan reflects nothing more than the impact of Japanese exports and Japanese acquisitions on American society. And it is also true that racism intrudes, as in the stereotyped depiction of all Japanese as humorless automatons unnaturally dedicated to their work.[1] But the greater influence on what is now happening is the unseen logic of strategy itself—the same logic that once blinded Americans to all the glaring faults of the Chinese regime when it seemed a useful ally against the Soviet Union, and which once easily obscured all differences with Japan. With fears of the Soviet Union rapidly waning, the logic now works in the opposite direction, to reveal divisive interests, values, and emotions which are rapidly promoting Japan into the unlikely role of Chief Enemy for many Americans, in lieu of the Soviet Union.

On the Japanese side, the undoing of the unifying logic has so far revealed itself mainly in the increasingly contemptuous impatience with which American demands are received. Yet good will for Americans remains widespread. Precisely because both U.S. imports and investments have been so effectively blocked, their impact on Japanese society has hardly been felt, and little hostility has been aroused on that score.

Still, U.S.-Japanese relations will probably con-

[1] A caricature of a minority of company men and factory workers, in a country that has a great abundance of artful dodgers, bohemians, layabouts, fitfully hard-working farmers, keepers of tiny shops and tinier bars that provide more diversion than income, gangsters, and Tora-san types: Mr. Tora, anti-hero of a long-running series of films, benevolently feckless, warmly human, and not at all hard-working, is a common Japanese type.

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tinue to deteriorate. Yet even that is hardly likely to recreate the classic sequence of economic quarrels becoming political quarrels that lead in turn to military confrontation. Instead, the instruments as well as the causes of conflict would be economic, with trade disputes fought out by trade sanctions and investment restrictions.

One could continue in this vein under the heading of the "internalization" of conflict to examine the far less probable eventuality of a U.S.-European Community quarrel, or to assess the further scope for ethnic conflicts within the Soviet Union itself. But it is the German case[2] that is now the most interesting, an instance of internalization that has already gone beyond interbloc quarreling, to penetrate within the European "bloc" itself.

For months now, the Germans have been encircled by the loudly advertised suspicions of their erstwhile allies on both sides. They have heard the crimes of the twelve years of the Third Reich abundantly cited against them, in spite of almost forty years of good conduct—democratic under the Western dispensation, and socialist under the Eastern. They have been exposed to official Soviet pronouncements, and quite a few authoritative if unofficial American voices, which proclaim that a unified Germany could once again become a dangerous Germany—as if contemporary German society still contained the demographic impulse and political dysfunctions that once made it so bellicose. They have witnessed French, British, and Polish leaders demanding guarantees of the current borders in a melodramatic evocation of 1939, as if aggressive territorial ambitions could reasonably be imputed to contemporary Germany.

In contrast to these chimerical fears—corrosive to be sure, but in the end insubstantial—there is the reality of the German economy, the third largest in the world.

Wealth need not translate into power, but ironically the same process of European integration that should further calm fears of a united Germany also offers the most effective mechanism for the translation of German wealth into power. The European Community (EC) is now enough of a government to be the venue of very important decisions, and to collect contributions from member states and pay out benefits. Though its bureaucracy can already make transnational decisions in many matters, and there is both proportional representation (in the European parliament) and a unanimity rule, major EC decisions are invariably shaped by coalitions of the various national governments, in which the weight of each country ultimately depends on the size of its contributions.

As the source of more than one-quarter of EC funds, the Federal Republic was already by far the strongest single state within that particular nonmilitary balance of power. That preponderance will now increase as East Germany's economy (the largest in Eastern Europe), and far greater potential, are added to widen the gap further between united Germany and the lesser members of the EC, none of which can match the German money-vote.

Unlike their much-advertised security concerns, therefore, the loss of relative economic leverage is a serious matter for Britain and France especially, because their claim to Great-Power status must now rest even more narrowly than before on their nuclear weapons, powerful indeed in destructive capacity but of scant and declining relevance in the day-to-day transactions of European and world politics.

Illogically enough, the anxieties prompted by the unification of Germany coexist with the general belief that since 1945 Europe has progressed very far in its "debellicization."[3] There is plenty of evidence of such an abandonment of the capacity to wage war. In Europe's popular culture, the sufferings and dangers of war loom much larger than its excitements and adventures, as discredited now as other romantic impulses. In almost all European societies, the peasant lads who would once go into uniform not unwillingly, if only to leave the drudgery of field and stable, are no more, and the industrial workers who could once be induced to leave the harsh labor of forge and factory to march into the fresh country air are now relatively few, and they can seek fresh air with their own cars on weekends and holidays. Above all, in Europe's political discourse, war is no longer considered and debated as an instrument of policy, but only as a catastrophe.

As against these tokens of debellicization, there are reservations. For one thing, the war=catastrophe equation is actually *nuclear* war=catastrophe; if the nuclear element is removed, the equation might revert to war=instrument of policy. That opens a larger question: is debellicization irreversible? What is one to make of the apparently widespread British eagerness to fight for the reconquest of the Falkland Islands in 1982? How is one to assess the approval of French public opinion not only for several recent military interventions in Africa, but also for a lethal commando raid in peaceful New Zealand? And most strikingly, perhaps, what of the recent acceptance by most Italians of the deployment of Italian warships in the Persian Gulf?

True, all such expeditions risked neither the safety of the homeland from bombardment or invasion (=catastrophe) nor the use of nuclear weapons in any form; the fact remains that in each instance war was risked or actually waged in the

[2] See "One-and-a-half Cheers for German Unification," by Josef Joffe, beginning on p. 26.—Ed.

[3] Norman Podhoretz's term; Sir Michael Howard prefers "debellation," which, however, implies an imposed renunciation of war, as in Virgil's *Aeneid* VI, 847.

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old manner, as an instrument of policy, with thousands of lives exposed to combat for purposes very far removed from self-defense in any immediate sense. Yet self-defense is the only purpose that debellicized societies are supposed to accept.

After more than forty years of oblivion, there is again some concern and much talk of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with Vilnius/Vilna its capital, but dear to Polish hearts; of Memel (now Klaipeda) that the Kremlin wants to subtract from an independent Lithuania; of Kaliningrad (ex-Koenigsberg) that would remain a Soviet enclave perhaps in need of a Polish or Lithuanian corridor; of trans-Carpathian Ruthenia that Stalin took from an unoffending Czechoslovakia and which remains disaffected; of Moldavia (ex-Bessarabia), acquired by Romania in 1919, taken by Stalin in 1940, retaken by Romania in 1941, Soviet again in 1944, and now separatist; of northern Bukovina, lost by Romania in 1944 but still largely Romanian in population and also separatist; of Silesia, upper and lower (though thankfully Danzig and adjacent East Prussia remain well forgotten); of Transylvania, where Romanian public opinion has not advanced enough to accept pluralism and the cultural autonomy that Hungarian-speakers seek; of Serbia and Kossovo, of Slovenia and Croatia, both of which seek separation from the rest of Yugoslavia.

Nevertheless, in all of these there is hardly one probable war; and even if one were to break out, chances are that it would remain within safe limits, rather like the Iran-Iraq war for all its destructions.

A Revived Soviet-Western Antagonism?

The internal politics that could eventually lead to a renewed conflict between the Soviet Union and the West, or perhaps its return as a Russian-Western antagonism, can be imagined easily enough: a palace revolt in the Kremlin that would bring new leaders bent on imperial restoration; or a stereotyped regression to tyranny by disenchanted reformers; or merely the use of the powerful presidential office created by Gorbachev to promote not liberalization but a resumption of centralized discipline; or a military assumption of power, with the decomposing Communist party replaced by the military hierarchy, as in Poland in December 1981.

At every stage of Gorbachev's liberalization so far, it has seemed improbable to most qualified foreign observers that it could continue, in part because of its contradictory acrobatics (a party-based regime systematically destroys party power), and in part because of the sorry record of aborted Russian and Soviet liberalizations. Scattered opinion polls suggest that most Russians have also continued to expect the failure of liberalization, but for a rather different reason: their ancestral belief that while others in the world may enjoy both liberty and order, only a cruel choice between chaos and dictatorship is given to them. One would have thought that today's largely urbanized and widely educated Russians could aspire to better choices than their ancestors, but in March 1990 the Congress of People's Deputies approved Gorbachev's request for a five-year presidency with very wide powers precisely on the grounds that the only alternative to a quasi-dictatorship was more chaos and even civil war.

Now, it is certainly true that the Soviet Union is as much chaotic as liberalized, to a degree that would quickly evoke demands for dictatorial solutions even in countries of long democratic experience.

First, the widespread breakdown of food distribution now replicates wartime shortages, but for the unlimited supply of cheap bread.

Second, the outbreaks of armed violence in the city of Alma-Ata, the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous province, the Nakhichevan autonomous republic, the province of Fergana, the city of Dushanbe, the Abkhaz autonomous republic, and the city of Baku, among other places, have cost many lives, and the livelihoods of the hundreds of thousands who are now refugees. As for riots, strikes, and lesser agitations, they have become frequent all over the Soviet Union, not least in its Russian heartland.

Third, the overt separatisms of Estonia, Latvia, Moldavia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and Lithuania's assertion of independence are prompting more separatisms in more republics—and within them, because the minorities of each republic do not want to come under the domination of the majority ethnic group.

Fourth, the amazingly overt gangsterism that even casual visitors can observe in Moscow cooperative restaurants as *mafiosi*[4] in dark shirts and silvery ties arrive in their black-market Mercedeses, escorted by molls in furs and outsize bodyguards, is only the pinnacle of a pettier and far more pervasive lawlessness: the taxi drivers who illegally ask for dollar fares while studiously passive policemen stand by; the shop assistants who now sell under-the-counter items for extra money without even bothering to conceal the transaction from indignant shoppers nearby; and the outright theft of state property on all sides.

Fifth, ordinary crime has seemingly exploded in an abundance of burglaries, muggings, petty theft, and robbery-killings never before seen.

Yet for all that, Gorbachev's liberalization seems set to continue under his newly constitutional quasi-dictatorship. Such a conjunction is as natural for Russians as it would be contradictory almost anywhere else—that was how Peter the Great modernized his Russia, and Khrushchev tried to liberalize in his own day.

Actually, even if the Soviet Union's democratization is interrupted and then reversed by a palace

[4] The original Sicilian term is now in everyday use in Moscow.

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coup or by a newly tyrannical Gorbachev or by military rule, that would not suffice by itself to allow a return of the Soviet-Western antagonism. A reversion to tyranny would merely be a precondition, because of the substantial demolition of the post-1945 structure of Soviet military power, based on tank and mechanized "motor-rifle" divisions deployed in Eastern Europe to threaten Western Europe, and deployed in Kazakhstan and Siberia to threaten China.

True, very little of the Soviet Union's great strength in ground forces (20 percent greater than supposedly inflated Western intelligence estimates, we now learn) has actually been dismantled as of this writing; and it is also true that their partial withdrawal from Chinese border areas could easily be reversed. But the liberation of Eastern Europe, including the critical invasion corridors of Poland and East Germany, is a historic transformation that a change of regime in Moscow could not possibly reverse without unimaginable consequences. Hence there is every reason to believe that both the present Conventional Forces in Europe negotiations, and President Bush's 195,000-225,000 troop limits, will soon be utterly overtaken by the withdrawal of virtually *all* Soviet forces from Eastern Europe[5]—their rate of withdrawal may now be constrained chiefly by the need to find housing inside the Soviet Union for their career officers and NCO's. In other words, the critical element of the entire post-1945 structure of Soviet military power is being irremediably abandoned.

Hence a return to a Soviet-Western antagonism in the old style would require the recreation of Soviet military power in a radically new style.

As it happens, however, that is precisely the intent of the rather youthful and technically sophisticated Soviet General Staff, the military group that we know to be dominant over more traditionally-minded tank marshals, gunners, and sailors.

It is this group that has supported Gorbachev's successful effort to eliminate as many "theater" nuclear weapons as possible from Europe—because the technologically revolutionary form of military power it plans is *non-nuclear* (with only strategic-nuclear forces still needed). And the General Staff obviously gave its green light to Gorbachev's highly deliberate renunciation of control over Eastern Europe under the "Sinatra doctrine"—because its planned new form of military power is *non-territorial*, i.e., it requires neither a defensive glacis of German-Polish territory nor forward jump-off bases in the same. The General Staff has also sanctioned Gorbachev's force reductions, neutralizing the inevitable opposition of the affected branches (whose own leaders took full advantage of *glasnost* to complain loudly), because the technologically revolutionary form of military power it plans will in due course replace the existing line forces, and in the meantime the reduction of the old releases resources to build the new.

This does not mean that the General Staff is enthusiastic about the abrupt liberation of Eastern Europe, and the now accelerated withdrawals and reductions of the traditional tank-heavy forces. Both are no doubt seen as premature. But the planned form of military power is compatible with the former, and excludes the perpetuation of the latter in their present, vast, size. As it is, almost 25 percent of ground-force conscripts come from Muslim ethnic groups, and the proportion would have risen to 50 percent soon after the year 2000. Non-coincidentally, the new form of military power is to be very capital-intensive, and will require rather few operators, probably none of them conscripts.

Likewise, the General Staff has presided over the much-advertised redirection of the ground forces from an offensive to a defensive emphasis. Because offensive tactics are in any case an essential part of any sound defense, and because from the first the declared change of doctrine has been punctuated by claims that Soviet military strategy was always defensive in any case, there is less than meets the eye in the change, even at a verbal level. Substantively, moreover, the chief change is a reduction in the proportion of battle tanks in line formations, and that is nothing more than a direct continuation of the Soviet army's long-term program to field more balanced forces, with a higher proportion of artillery and mechanized infantry.

Still, a more defensive orientation for the line forces is fully congruent with the new form of military power planned by the General Staff. Because the latter is entirely offensive in its operational mode, but is of no use to hold territory, it can best be complemented by ground forces of classic form specialized for territorial defense. Hence there is an element of the magician's misdirection in what is going on: while on the illuminated center stage the sword is truly replaced by an inoffensive shield, the new sword now being fashioned remains offstage.

Lastly, it is clearly the Soviet General Staff that has instigated Gorbachev's amazing persistence in opposing SDI. Why? Or rather, why is it that Gorbachev has renounced every one of his original 1985 domestic and foreign-policy stances (from his anti-vodka campaign and the primacy of the Communist party to the occupation of Afghanistan and the control of Eastern Europe) with the single exception of his opposition to SDI? The reason is that whatever shortcomings SDI might have in providing an astrodome-like defense for the United States against ballistic missiles, it happens to

[5] The first non-Communist Polish government quickly displayed strategic unwisdom reminiscent of pre-1939 Poland by threatening to keep Soviet forces in place unless it obtained German territorial "guarantees"; but all manner of (irrelevant) guarantees have been given.

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be fatally effective against the new form of military power planned by the Soviet General Staff.

So what is this great new scheme? As sufficiently described in published Soviet military literature,[6] the new form of military power would consist of Reconnaissance-Strike Complexes (RSC's, or RUC's, the Russian initials) designed to attack all larger objects on land (including tanks) and at sea (all surface warships) even in the largest numbers, by almost simultaneous strikes of unlimited range. At present, only fixed targets of known location can be attacked by remote control under central direction, notably with ballistic missiles; RSC's would extend the scope of remote-control warfare to include all larger mobile targets as well, i.e., the key constituents of present armies and navies. In principle, each RSC would consist of: (1) satellite-borne TV cameras, radars, and other sensors[7] (each perhaps yielding only fragmentary target data); (2) data-fusion/command centers, to spot, identify, and locate targets by combining all available information;[8] and (3) non-nuclear ballistic and cruise missiles,[9] to attack designated targets.

A cruiser in the Pacific, for example, could be seen by satellite sensors, identified and located by data-fusion, and then targeted by a ballistic missile whose maneuvering warhead would be command-guided to destroy it, with steering updates as necessary to keep up with the cruiser's movement. Clusters of tanks in Western Europe or China could likewise be seen by satellite or airborne sensors, precisely located and designated as targets by the relevant RSC data-fusion/command center, and then attacked by "cargo" cruise missiles with submissiles (or by strike aircraft with self-guided area munitions).

Thus an array of RSC's could provide the principal offensive means of non-nuclear warfare, and would only require the supplement of strategic-nuclear forces (for deterrence, or compellence) and of internal-security, frontier-defense, and light-expeditionary forces, with their air and naval adjuncts.

Now Gorbachev's unique persistence in demanding the cessation of American SDI efforts can be readily understood. Even a rudimentary SDI array, too imperfect to provide much of a defense against ballistic missiles, could nevertheless blind RSC's by destroying the satellites (mostly very easy targets) that carry their sensors. Moreover, because RSC's would be employed in non-nuclear warfare over a period of days or weeks, even an SDI array too slow to engage ballistic missiles in a matter of mere minutes could serve very well by destroying RSC satellites in a few hours.

It may well be asked why Pentagon officials and other interested publicists have told us so little about Soviet RSC schemes. They are not usually so reticent in advertising Soviet military endeavors. Certainly it is not because information is lacking.

One reason perhaps is that RSC schemes are directly competitive with the traditional combat forces of essentially World War II pattern that Western armies, air forces, and navies are still perpetuating, and still trying to refine in spite of declining military budgets. True, Soviet RSC schemes are very much "mission-enhancing" for SDI—but even in the United States, the SDI bureaucracy is very small and uninfluential as compared with the Army, Navy, and Air Force bureaucracies that would be greatly damaged by the advent of remote-control RSC warfare.[10] While any conscious manipulation of the data is most unlikely, it is clear that Western military institutions have no incentive to draw attention to the keen Soviet interest in remote-control warfare by RSC's (just as until the mid-1950's U.S. Air Force intelligence had no incentive to focus on the Soviet development of intercontinental ballistic missiles—to do so would only have made it harder for the Air Force to secure funding for its preferred bombers).

Another reason for the failure to take seriously the expressed Soviet interest in RSC warfare is far more traditional—the historic tendency greatly to underestimate the peculiar Russian talent for military innovation, a talent which derives from an unusually serious attitude to the study of strategy, which in turn empowers new ideas against established, self-serving, institutional doctrines. That

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[6] See, e.g., Notra Trulock III *et al.*, "Soviet Military Thought in Transition: Implications for the Long-Term Military Competition," Pacific-Sierra Corporation, Report 1831, April 7, 1988.

[7] Supplemented by (ultra-high-altitude) manned observation aircraft and/or remotely-piloted vehicles, including cheaper low-altitude RPV's.

[8] From satellite-borne radars, TV, and other instant-relay cameras, signals' receiver/locators as well as generic intelligence sources; "data-fusion" is the term of art for the computer-assisted and even automated collation and display of data of diverse origin.

[9] As well as manned strike aircraft with self-guided area munitions or stand-off missiles, whose pilots would be directed to their weapon-release points by navigation/attack signals from the RSC, without having to search for their (mobile) targets visually or electronically. Because the aircraft could thus fly optimal evasion profiles (without imposed target-finding climbs) their exposure to on-route interception would be minimized; without RSC's, only fixed targets of known location can be attacked in this manner. In other words, strike aircraft would be employed as reusable manned missiles, for the sake of their large payloads.

[10] RSC's would make the tanks and field artillery of "heavy" continental forces very vulnerable, and would also compete with their functions, defensively if not offensively (RSC's could conquer but not hold ground); RSC's could not compete with the "flag-showing" role of naval forces, but would make all larger surface ships totally vulnerable, and could economically replace offensive carrier aviation; RSC's would compete effectively with the non-nuclear functions of bombers and attack aircraft, and deprive "air-superiority" aircraft of their mission by displacing offensive tactical air power. In other words, RSC's would threaten the key branches of each service that still perpetuate World War II forms of warfare (armor and artillery for armies; surface ship and carrier aviation for navies; and both strategic and tactical aviation for air forces) with only security and expeditionary forces largely exempted.

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is why it was the Soviet armed forces that introduced the large-scale use of anti-ship missiles, revolutionizing naval warfare; and ballistic missiles, revolutionizing nuclear warfare; and anti-aircraft missiles, revolutionizing air warfare; and anti-tank missiles, revolutionizing armored warfare. None was a Soviet invention, and all were amply familiar to Western armed forces, but in their case there was no idea-driven General Staff to overcome the entrenched institutions that resisted innovation. Needless to say, the same is true of the RSC's, an idea that actually originated in the United States, but which the U.S. services have successfully resisted.

At this particular time, moreover, there is a third reason for disregarding the expressed Soviet interest in developing RSC capabilities. The very idea of a revolutionary Soviet advance in applying the highest of high technologies can easily seem outlandish in light of the present condition of the Soviet economy, not merely poor but distressed, not merely ill-organized but downright chaotic. The Soviet Union undeniably already has satellite-borne sensors and also missiles, both cruise and ballistic, that would only need upgrading for RSC purposes. But the one missing component, the data-fusion centers, would require the Soviet Union to excel precisely in the field where its technology is weakest, namely, sophisticated electronic data-processing.

Intellectually, qualified Western observers must recognize that Soviet military innovation has routinely exceeded by a wide margin the miserable technological standards of Soviet society as a whole, and also that long-term military innovation has been pursued relentlessly even under the most adverse conditions. When Stalin launched the exceptionally broad rearmament plan of 1946 to acquire jet fighters, jet bombers, cruisers, submarines by the hundred, new tanks, and both fission and fusion bombs, among other technologically advanced weapons, the poverty of the Soviet Union was far harsher than now, and its entire Western part was a ruined land of wrecked cities and a devastated agriculture. And yet, after acknowledging these facts, the same observers will nevertheless fall victim to the historic temptation to underestimate the Russians, notwithstanding all their proven technological successes, from the war-winning T-34 tank of 1941 to today's titanium-hulled submarines and mobile ballistic missiles.

The Soviet Union is certainly much inferior in the critical RSC technique, but strategic achievements are always relative—and only one side is competing so far. Western armed forces continue to embellish their armored vehicles, ships, and manned aircraft of classic form, while the Soviet General Staff promotes its revolutionary innovation. Actually, the decline of Western military budgets has already caused a general slowdown of innovation, as funds are increasingly reserved for the upkeep ("readiness") of the established forces—the very types of forces that the Soviet General Staff is willing to see reduced.

To be sure, the political changes that may yet lead to some sort of more or less liberalized Soviet confederation, the rise of many nationalisms old and new that may lead instead to the disaggregation of the Soviet Union, and the General Staff scheme itself, are all proceeding on different paths with different timetables, while the sorely troubled Soviet economy is evolving on yet another course, driven by sometimes obscure impulses and subjected as it is to ill-informed, ideologically constrained, and often contradictory policies.

There is no telling how the four paths will evolve, interact, or collide, to promote, delay, or even stop the pursuit of the military strategy that might revive the Soviet-Western antagonism—or rather an old-new Russian-Western antagonism. For even Russia alone would still remain the world's largest state in geographic extent, still dominant in the Eurasian land mass, with a population of some 145 million stout-hearted people, often deeply patriotic and now rather well-educated.

The RSC scheme is certainly congruent with the characteristics of a future Russian state, because it would provide military power of global reach regardless of geographic access, and a vast military-technical superiority over all adjacent states regardless of the size of their populations.

On the other hand, if a reversion to a world again structured by a Russian-Western military confrontation depended on the advent of RSC's, it could not occur until the next decade. And of course it is perfectly possible that by then such a confrontation could be avoided anyway, especially if a genuinely democratic Russia were finally to emerge—and if by then North-South tensions were to have become more serious than they now are.

The New Ideological Challenge to Democratic Capitalism

So far, our entire discussion has proceeded on the basis of the axiom that strategy is stronger than politics, and politics in turn is stronger than economic self-interest, the former because of the priority of security, the latter because of the priority of social cohesion. But that axiom is incomplete, because there is a force stronger than strategy—the force of collectively-motivating ideas, which incidentally define the purposes of strategy itself insofar as they energize conflict.

Now that the irremediable decline of Marxism-Leninism has virtually ended that prolonged opposition to democratic capitalism, does the latter truly face no serious ideological challenge? That it does not was the premise of Francis Fukuyama's famous advertisement of the end of history. In that

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essay, Hegel was reverently invoked, yet the argument proceeded from the most un-Hegelian proposition that because democratic capitalism has defeated both fascism and Communism, it will remain forever unchallenged, leaving the world bereft of an ideological struggle to fuel the motor of history.

Actually one may identify a competing ideology in the localist and environmentalist amalgam that might best be called "communitarianism," which contains both a fundamental critique of democratic capitalism and substitute prescriptions.

Unlike all forms of Marxism, communitarianism does not deny the superior efficiency of capitalist market dynamics, but it rejects that efficiency on the grounds that it damages human relations and harms nature through the very growth it so successfully promotes. Communitarianism would stop the capitalist market from treating nature as an array of potential commodities to be bought and sold, and it would oppose the ceaseless change caused by capitalist competition because it disrupts established communities and stable social relations.

The inherent conflict between economy and community has, of course, long been recognized, but when democratic capitalism first arrived on the scene to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and liberate individuals imprisoned in socially oppressive traditional societies, its alienating side-effects were easily accepted as well worth the price.

The very success of democratic capitalism, however, undermines its continued validity: the greater the supply of goods and services, the greater the freedom from restrictive traditions already achieved, the less valuable are the increments of freedom and prosperity that capitalism provides for the already free and prosperous. At the same time, the environmentally disruptive and socially alienating effects of the market continue undiminished, and may even accelerate. Thus the achievements of capitalism are themselves subject to the law of diminishing marginal returns—and communitarianism holds that we are already on the flat of the curve.

The strength of communitarianism, under whatever name, is already powerfully felt in the anti-growth policies of a great and growing number of local governments throughout the industrialized world. It is felt even more decisively in the continued spread and intensification of environmentalist resistance to virtually all interference with nature—a resistance seemingly motivated by particular concerns (this river, that valley), but in fact of universal scope.

If energy supply is the issue, for example, first nuclear power is rejected on the grounds that a reactor accident would leave a wasteland of destroyed nature (and also harm humans); then hydroelectric generation is opposed because it would disrupt the ecology of a river; then the alternative of burning fossil fuels is refused because of the pollution it would cause; and finally the burning of non-polluting natural gas is resisted because it would cause "heat pollution." That, of course, leaves no practical way of supplying additional energy for economic growth; at that point, the ostensible communitarian remedy is to rely on clean and renewable solar and wind energy, while the actual remedy—given that solar and wind power is rarely a feasible solution—is to stop growth in the first place. If it is then pointed out that a growing population would be progressively impoverished if the economy does not grow along with it, the environmentalist remedy is to stop population growth.

The communitarians who oppose the workings of the market do not usually acknowledge, or indeed recognize, that to oppose the market is to oppose democratic capitalism as a whole, including all its democratic processes—because only the market can assure the diffusion of wealth that in turn sustains a multiplicity of democratic expressions. But some communitarians are explicitly ready to subordinate democratic majority rule to their own imperatives. As with Lenin's vanguard that must be willing to ignore the expressed will of the people to serve its real interests (which the people are too ignorant to recognize), the communitarian vanguard is prepared to impose its preferences on majorities too backward to appreciate their superior merits. In the United States that is now routinely accomplished by resorting to the courts to prohibit the pro-growth decisions of democratically-elected governments at the local, state, and federal levels.

Because of its very nature, however, communitarianism is hardly likely to be instrumentalized by a great power to sustain a new ideological confrontation with democratic capitalism. But if it continues to spread as it has, and intensify as it also has, communitarianism may not need the support of a great power to present a serious challenge to capitalism and democracy. Indeed, more than the South, more than the "internalized" hostilities of the post-cold war era, and more than a revival of Russian imperialism, communitarianism bids fair to replace the failed prophecy of Marx, the failed politics of Lenin, and the failed economic dogma of Stalin as the newest major threat to the free institutions of the West.

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One-and-a-half Cheers for German Unification

Josef Joffe

WRITING in the *International Herald Tribune*, a German Jewish journalist poured it all out. A "unified Germany," this son of Holocaust survivors warned, "may grow into everything the world abhorred in the Germany of the early part of the century: a powerful country never content to accept limits on its political or economic strength, a self-centered society . . . whose rulers remain happily oblivious to foreigners' concerns." The new Germany might resemble the "bizarre monarchy that was the Reich around the turn of the century." World War I followed, and then the doomed Weimar Republic, paving the "way for the rise of the Nazi party [and for a] government that made mass murder a main goal of its agenda." Soon, we might be watching the replay. "The peaceful and moderately dull Federal Republic of Germany . . . is leaving the stage. Its replacement, a rich and mighty entity, . . . may become a strange and eerie place—perhaps even the source of a new wave of darkness spreading over the earth."

This is the archetypal horror scenario that has haunted observers around the world since the Berlin Wall fell last November—Jews and non-Jews, Americans, Frenchmen, Britons, Russians, even Germans themselves. Nor is it so strange that people should be oppressed by such dark visions of Germany *rediviva*. Though Auschwitz and Hitler are now forty-five years in the past, our memory still is haunted by both—and the 55 million dead of the war. No event in human history has been "larger" than World War II; no evil has been greater than that inflicted by Nazi Germany on itself and on the rest of the world. Was not Germany's unification in 1871 the root of it all? And are we not about to witness the remake today? Certainly by reasoning backward, we are quick to discover a tidy chain of historical necessity which leads from German unification to global disaster.

The story begins on January 18, 1871, when the modern German empire was proclaimed at Versailles. On that fateful day, Prussia doubled its victory over France by conquering Germany, as it were. Willing or not, a bunch of ancient kingdoms, principalities, duchies, and cities was swept into the Second Reich by Bismarck's Prussia. Its very name spelled an ominous challenge to the European order. The First Reich had been the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (962-1806), which saw itself as heir to Rome and thus to much of Europe. Replacing the old Reich's pretensions with real strength, the Wilhelminian Empire quickly turned into the powerhouse of Europe. Dynamic and restless, ebullient but unsure of itself, the new Reich shouldered its way to the table of the Great Powers when the chips were already well-distributed. And so, Germany was bound to threaten all the established players and, in turn, to be threatened by them.

Bad timing was compounded by the curse of geography. Plunked down in the middle of Europe, the Reich was stuck with a highly vulnerable position. Saddled with long, "unnatural" frontiers and surrounded by heavyweight rivals, the new Germany easily fell for a twin temptation. At home, democracy (moving forward fitfully in Britain and France) was sacrificed to the imperatives of national power, and nationalism, the heady cry of "us against them," was proffered as a substitute for liberty and equality. The second temptation, fed by an accelerating cycle of paranoia and aggressiveness, was in the cult of the strategic offensive. If each and all were begrudging Germany its "place in the sun," if the Reich was beset by France in the West, by Russia in the East, and by Britain from across the sea, why not break the stranglehold once and for all? World War I was triggered by a terrorist murder in Sarajevo, but in truth it represented Germany's ruthless attempt to solve its endemic security problem by reaching for all-out hegemony.

Failure led to defeat, revolution, and the doomed democratic experiment of the Weimar Republic—and a mere twenty years later to the vastly more brutal and bloody second try. The aftermath of the Third Reich is still with us. German and East European Jewry was annihilated. Europe's frontiers were redrawn. Soviet armies encamped in the heart of Europe, and they are beginning to withdraw only now, almost half a

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century after marching all the way to the Elbe River. Eastern Europe has regained its freedom, but it will take decades to clear away the rubble left behind by Nazi and then Soviet imperialism. Western Europe recovered long ago, but who could have predicted such a happy outcome while surveying the moribund continent on V-E Day?

And now, on the threshold of "Germany, united fatherland," it is feared that the vicious cycle of unification and catastrophe will begin anew. Cartoonists and columnists in America, France, and Britain have been inordinately fond of the image of the Fourth Reich, thus dragging the past 120 years of German history forward into the future. To be sure, the analogy is seductive not only to the pundits and pencil wielders. For all of us feel—indeed, *know*—that an era is coming to an end.

The era just ending, though flawed by ideological and physical partition, has given us the comfort of almost immutable stability. A resurgent West Germany was safely harnessed to the West, and the power of Germany as a whole was nicely neutralized in two countervailing alliances. For some forty years, postwar Germany dared not—and could not—use its economic muscle and geographic advantage in the kind of contest that had brought grief to Europe and the world during the Second Thirty Years' War. But now the European game is changing, and a soon-to-be reunited Germany again will be the number-one player. Will "a new wave of darkness" spread forth from Germany once more?

I

TEMPTING as the historical analogies may be, they are almost completely wrong. Anybody reasoning forward from past disaster will be hard put to make the indictment stick. Search and dig as he may, he will scarcely find the social, political, or economic ingredients in contemporary Germany that poisoned the Wilhelminian Empire and the Weimar Republic. For starters, just look at the vignettes of the very recent past—since the Berlin Wall was breached on November 9 of last year.

Though American anchormen, descending in droves on Germany on that occasion, breathlessly announced that Bonn's parliamentarians had risen to intone *Deutschland über alles,* they got their lyrics wrong. In fact, the Bundestag deputies were singing *Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit* ("Unity, Justice, Freedom"), and not the tainted words of the pre-1945 national anthem which the world has come to see as the very epitome of German national hubris.* Even more telling was the song of the young people dancing atop the Berlin Wall that night: *So ein Tag, so wunderschön wie heute* ("What a Day, What a Beautiful Day"). That is the traditional ditty of German soccer fans celebrating the victory of their team; played at a leisurely three-quarter beat, the tune does not quite make it as a rabble-rouser. Amid popping champagne corks, the emotions were those of a family reunion—not the bloody-minded reflexes of unshackled nationalism. People got drunk on booze, not on *Volk* and *Vaterland.*

In West Germany, nobody was thronging through the streets of Frankurt, Munich, or Hamburg to clamor for *Anschluss.* Indeed, *nobody* was marching—except those East Germans who streamed through the Wall with the incredulous wonderment that might befall inmates suddenly left in charge of the jailhouse. Not *Deutschland* raised their heartbeats, but kiwis and bananas, those symbols of untasted luxury which they carted home by the bushel. In March, during the first free election in East Germany in fifty-seven years, almost half the electorate cast their ballots for the conservative Alliance for Germany, surrogates of Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU). And they shunted aside the Social Democrats (SPD) for a simple, powerful reason.

While the SPD wanted to go slow, the Chancellor and his cohorts in Bonn stood for quick monetary and economic union. And in the minds of East Germans, that message read not *Deutschland über alles* but *Deutschemark über alles.* Kohl was the "White Knight" from across the Elbe, extending a friendly takeover offer that would turn sinking Prusso-socialism into a subsidiary of fabulously rich Bonn, Inc. East-marks, fetching at one point only ten West German pfennigs on the black market, would be converted one-for-one into the real thing. To the Saxons and Thuringians, unity evoked not the glory of a reconstituted fatherland but above all the shortest of shortcuts to West German capitalism.

II

THERE may be a larger point in this that transcends the two Germanys: nationalism isn't what it used to be—not in the democratic-industrial segment of the world that stretches from Berkeley to Berlin. Compare 1990 to 1890. How easy it was then to mobilize entire nations around shibboleths like "the white man's burden," "Remember the *Maine,*" and *"Gott strafe England"* ("May God Punish England"). Millions went to their deaths in 1914 because their *patrie, Vaterland,* or *rodina* so demanded. From 1789 to 1945, European history was written by nations in arms, and nationalism was the murderous energy that drove and sustained them.

Today one has to travel farther afield to observe that blood-fueled engine in action—to Africa and Asia. Thirty thousand Frenchmen were enough to

* The melody of *Deutschland über alles,* by the way, was composed by Joseph Haydn, and it extolled not the German *Volk* but the kindly Austrian Emperor Franz.

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conquer Algeria in 1830, twenty times as many could not hold it in 1962. Six million tons of explosives were dropped on Vietnam, three times more than on Nazi Germany, yet Ho Chi Minh's armies prevailed over the United States. Not Westerners but Arabs, be it in Lebanon or against Israel, today act out their tribal fantasies and obsessions with collective mayhem. Human-wave attacks, *de rigueur* for Frenchmen and Germans in the trenches of Flanders, have now become a specialty of Iranians—who thought very little of using their own children as living mine-sweepers.

Conquest and carnage in the name of nation or faith, then, are no longer a Western pastime; they have been extruded to the Third World, including the southern reaches of the Soviet empire. Perhaps nationalist frenzy will stage a comeback where nationality has been suppressed for so long—in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Russia. But in the Euro-Atlantic world, which will soon encompass all of Germany, World War II may have been the last gasp of the "violent and poetical excitement to arms," as Tocqueville called it. What we witness today between Nottingham and Naples is a pale copy of the real thing.

The nation-state is alive and well, but in the West the paranoia and hatred that used to whip nations into collective hysteria have wilted, exposing a toothless kind of national consciousness. The contemporary mutation makes for colorful celebrations of Bastille Day or the Fourth of July and, quadriennally, of Olympic victories. Occasionally nationalism still unites a society behind a Falklands-type expedition, and a more private version has sent soccer hoodlums on a rampage in stadiums around Europe (though the underlying emotion probably was boredom rather than chauvinism). Yet otherwise, Western nationalism has gone the way of Rosie the Riveter and Captain America.

WHY do yesterday's volcanoes appear to be extinct—in Germany as elsewhere? One reason, though disappearing into the mist of history, is the memory of two world wars. Seventy million dead add up to a powerful taboo. A more enduring reason is nuclear weapons. In the brooding shadow of the atom, national hubris not only invokes the price of national suicide, but, more important, the price is known beforehand. The Kaiser's soldiers left Berlin on August 3, 1914 with the jubilant pledge: "We'll be back for Christmas." Today, they understand that they might not have a city to which to return.

Similarly, the Germans did not know on September 1, 1939 what their country would look like on May 8, 1945; today, in a world of nuclear weapons, they and everybody else can foresee the consequences with horrifying precision. The paralyzing effect of nuclear weapons may also explain why peace is not just the possession of the well-settled Western democracies, but a blessing bestowed on *all* nations, democratic or not, as long as they live in the realm of the "balance of terror." Conversely, the Third World can indulge in collective bloodshed because, beyond the nuclear arena, that luxury does not come with an existential price tag attached.

A third answer is rooted in the nature of contemporary Western society, which no longer seems to harbor the historical sources of jingoism. To "busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels" was Henry IV's deathbed advice to his son and successor. With that counsel, Shakespeare captured an essential condition of chauvinism: intractable internal conflict that makes rulers and elites resort to the diversion of flag-waving. The heyday of Western nationalism, *circa* 1840-1940, also happens to span a century of economic revolution and wrenching political adaptation—and there is more than coincidence in this correlation. Throughout the West, the onslaught of secularization, industrialization, and urbanization—in short, "modernity"—wreaked havoc on societies given to traditional authority, ancient loyalties, and sedate change. The price of modernity was conflict: between workers and owners, Protestants and Catholics, city and country, rulers and ruled.

The "hidden hand of the market" drove peasants off the land and cobblers off the bench, robbing them of their roots and sweeping them into the maws of urban alienation. Fortunes were made and lost in cycles of boom and bust which would draw the multitudes into the production process only to cast them out again at the next downturn. Battered by vast anonymous forces, no society in the West enjoyed a surfeit of individual happiness and political harmony. But in Bismarckian Germany, something else happened—or more precisely, did not happen.

In France, Britain, and the United States uprooted peasants and downtrodden proletarians ultimately became *citizens* for whom the miseries of modernity were blunted by the blessings of democracy. As the franchise trickled down, previously excluded groups gained power and a sense of mastery over their own fates; their voices and their votes mattered. Not so in Bismarckian Germany where economic expansion and democracy went off in opposite directions. "Enrich yourselves, but leave the driving to us," was the message of the ancien régime that ruled the Second Reich. The economic revolution did not unleash a political one; as wealth increased by leaps and bounds, power remained concentrated in the hands of the few.

The mighty Reich was a class- and conflict-ridden society, mortgaged to a bourgeoisie that had sold away its birthright to the old aristocracy. Nationalism was the savior of that tottering construction, the cement that held it all together. For nationalism is that wondrous "political good" which is never scarce and which bestows psychic equality on rich and poor, on masters and servants

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alike. Chauvinism, moreover, came easy to a nation that had only recently joined the ranks of the Great Powers, provoking the other players merely by dint of its existence. In a threatening world, the appeal to discipline, duty, and fatherland did not require much mendacity; it was a message any German could understand.

The Weimar Republic was a replay in a far more noxious setting. The Second Reich, after all, was born in national triumph; the Weimar Republic was the product of national disaster. Bismarck and successors presided over an expanding economy; Weimar Germany was a basket case kept alive by infusions of (mainly) American loans. In the late 19th century, Berlin was the diplomatic master of Europe; Germany after World War I was a political outcast, forever humbled by the victors who had imposed a punitive peace in Versailles. There was democracy, to be sure, but the experiment was tainted from the very beginning by the shame of defeat and the toll of economic failure. Perhaps the Germans still might have made it, in spite of the hyperinflation of 1923 that turned society upside-down. But then the Depression hit. It sharpened ancient class conflicts while disaster after disaster, denying any respite, left only room for delusion and paranoia.

Into that void of rationality and faith stepped, as if made to order by a Satanic god, the pseudo-messianic figure of Hitler. The Fuehrer promised deliverance, rebirth, and salvation—with a message that more and more Germans were only too willing to swallow. Democracy? That was the alien faith of the victors. Freedom? That was but the privilege of the "plutocrats" and the "parasites" who, in cahoots with the "politicians," were sucking the lifeblood out of the honest working man. For people in the grip of economic agony, submission to *Volk* and Fuehrer spelled instant, reassuring equality which the cruel hand of the market would never yield. And Hitler offered them more than just equality. Whether rich or poor, high-born or humble, any German was now a member of the master-race destined to vanquish the enemy within (the Jews) and the enemy without (Russian Bolsheviks and Western capitalists) who, together, had conspired to enslave the German nation.

III

The moral of this tale is a simple one. By no stretch of the imagination is the Federal Republic, though to be fused soon with its East German brother, a precursor of the Fourth Reich. How do we know? Germans today are inordinately fond of telling themselves and others: "We have learned our historical lesson," meaning: "We were bad then, but we are good now, and therefore you should trust us."

Such incantations, though earnestly uttered, are beside the point. We do not bestow a clean bill of health on an ex-junkie just on his say-so. We look for more tangible proof: does he hold down a job, does he avoid bad company, do his life circumstances keep him from temptation? The real point is that, *objectively*, contemporary West Germany bears little resemblance to the Bismarckian Empire or the Weimar Republic; nor does the Federal Republic live in the same world that its predecessors occupied. In its essential features, it is like any advanced Western society, moving no longer along the *Sonderweg*, the path of separate development, that set previous incarnations of Germany apart from Britain, France, and the United States.

To begin with, democracy works in West Germany, whereas it was absent in the Second Reich (1871–1919) and doomed in the First Republic (1919–33). And it works not because the new German is "good," while his grandparents were "bad," but because the objective conditions are, for once, benign. Like its Weimar precursor, the Federal Republic was born in defeat, dismemberment, and humiliation. Yet this time two debilitating ingredients were mercifully absent: economic catastrophe and a real sense of renewed war.

The difference between 1919 and 1945 was the cold war, which soon turned a pariah into an indispensable ally. Instead of reparations, there was Marshall Plan aid. Instead of competitive devaluations and beggar-thy-neighbor tariffs, there was free trade and monetary expansion in the context of GATT, the World Bank, and the IMF, institutions built and managed by the United States. Trade outlets lost in the East were doubled and tripled by the Common Market in the West, fueling steady, export-led growth. Paradoxically, even dismemberment and partition proved a boon, feeding, until the Wall was built in 1961, twelve million refugees into a booming economy where labor was soon becoming a scarce commodity.

Unlike the Weimar Republic, the Bonn Republic could *enjoy* the economic consequences of peace; and, as a result, democracy flourished. But just as important, the politics were also right. The great loser of World War I, Weimar Germany, could never clear the accounts. It remained the object of suspicion and the victim of foreign imposition. Not so the Federal Republic. Soon the outcast was handed membership in a Western community that delivered shelter and a role. Instead of French intervention, there was Franco-German friendship. Instead of endemic insecurity, there was NATO and a junior partnership with the United States. For once, Germany was not alone but firmly embedded in the West. And because West German—and European—security was guaranteed by a mighty superpower, the Federal Republic was blessed twice: it could not threaten others—and it could not be threatened by them. To exaggerate a bit, West German democracy was the sturdy child of the cold war and an American-sponsored Western community.

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Safety and prosperity prepared the grounds where the seeds of civility, democracy, and, yes, "Westernization" could take root after 1945—as they could not after 1919. In the beginning, there were just the letters of a constitution patterned largely after the American model. But as time went on, a political miracle unfolded that was even more impressive than its vaunted economic twin. Maybe Germans are very *gründlich* (thoroughly efficient) at anything they do, be it totalitarianism or democracy. But the fact is that they excelled in the democratic game in ways none dared predict on the day the Nazi nightmare was crushed by American and Russian tanks.

As time went on, Western democracy—rejected after 1871 and 1919 and torn to shreds after 1933—came to rest on a stronger foundation than just obeisance to the loaded guns of the victors. Here are some of the way-stations. In the 1950's, the extremist parties of the Right and the Left, new Nazis and old Communists, fell into oblivion one by one.* Even the party of the Eastern refugees (BHE), beholden to revisionist and nationalist rhetoric, withered away as its members found a place and prosperity in the newly rich Federal Republic.†

In the early 1960's, the democratic constitutional mechanism passed its first critical test in a battle between the freedom of the press and the powers of the executive. Following the orders of Defense Minister Franz-Josef Strauss, the police occupied the building of the *Spiegel* magazine, arresting key editors on the charge of treason in connection with a story on the armed forces. Strauss was later exonerated by the courts, but in the meantime, he had been forced to resign for reasons that recall Richard Nixon's fall: trying to cover up his role in the affair, he had lied to parliament. For a society that had only recently come to live by the rule of law and the separation of powers, that outcome augured well for the future.

About once every decade after the war, civilian supremacy was tested by individual members of the military establishment (though never as brutally as in the encounter during the Korean War between General Douglas MacArthur and President Harry Truman). In each case, the civilian authorities prevailed—and the generals resigned. The 1970's witnessed the rise of terrorism, complete with spectacular murders of business leaders. Predictably, there was a cry for harsher laws and greater police powers. In the end, though, civil rights were not curtailed, apart from the ugly *Extremistenbeschluss* that barred radicals from the civil service—be they lowly railroad workers or high defense officials. The Constitutional Court, at first the weakest of the three branches, successively took a page out of *Marbury* v. *Madison*, asserting its powers against the executive and establishing its right not just to interpret but to make the law according to constitutional principle. This is a far cry from Weimar, where the judiciary would often serve rather than check the powers that be.

More and more, Bonn turned out to be anything but Weimar. Yet in the 1960's, memories of the 1930's suddenly returned with a vengeance. In mid-decade, the Federal Republic experienced its first serious recession. Half-a-million people were out of work, and that correlated ominously with the rise of the neo-Nazi National Democratic party (NPD). So Bonn was like Weimar after all? The specter, however, soon dissipated, and today, the NPD garners less than 1 percent at the polls. If Bonn *were* Weimar, it should be getting a great deal more. Throughout much of the 1980's, unemployment has hovered around two million (about 8 percent of the workforce), yet the neo-Nazis are on the verge of extinction.

What then of the cynically mislabeled Republikaners, a bunch of populists, nationalists, and xenophobes who started making headlines last year? They gained their first parliamentary seats in the West Berlin regional assembly in January 1989, and they soared to worrisome prominence in the elections to the European parliament five months later (7.2 percent nationwide). Yet today they languish below 3 percent in the opinion polls, and in the most recent state elections, in high-unemployment Saarland, a rustbelt region, they fetched only 3.3 percent.

The reason may be an old one in the annals of electoral politics. A protest vote does not a party make, and sheer resentment, in which the Republikaners try to trade, does not make for stable voting allegiances—at least not in a basically well-settled society. Unlike Weimar Germany, the Federal Republic is not afflicted with personal misery and collective humiliation—at worst only with sheer boredom. After a while, the novelty of an "anti-party" party wears off, and the flock returns to the established organizations which, by then, have stolen the anti-party's thunder by promising cheap housing and job programs. Unemployment, even of the permanent kind, does not thrust its victims into the lumpenproletariat—thanks to a lavish welfare net extended by the government.

The larger point is that the modern Western welfare state—in Germany as elsewhere—has plenty of defenses against the revolt of the losers. In the 1920's, an impoverished young German might have joined the Storm Troopers for the sake of a fresh brown shirt, three meals a day, and the

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* Two parties were expressly outlawed. Founded in 1949, the Socialist Reich party (SRP), a Nazi surrogate, was declared illegal by the Constitutional Court in 1952. The Communists (KPD) suffered the same fate in 1956.

† The fate of the Eastern refugees makes for an instructive contrast with the Arab refugees from the wars against Israel. The Germans from Silesia, Pomerania, Bohemia, etc. were rigorously integrated into the Federal Republic so as to blunt the edge of revisionism. In order to keep revanchism alive, the Palestinian refugees were deliberately interned in camps around Israel by Arab regimes.

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social status conferred by a shiny pair of jackboots. Today, his out-of-work grandchild gets two-thirds of his last after-tax income from the unemployment office, and he does not even have to pick it up; it is deposited in his bank account. More important, he does not have to attend a mass rally in order to relieve his boredom. Instead he can pop a video into his machine, or spend his welfare check in sunny, cheap Mallorca. In short, the nature of contemporary Western society is such that even the disadvantaged can satisfy their personal needs in personal ways; they need not submit to a Fuehrer or collective. And that cuts down the business opportunities of Pied Pipers.

Those who fear a "new wave of darkness" simply overlook how much Germany today is part of the Western mainstream. The Republikaners resemble Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in France more than they do the SA or NSDAP of yore. They resent high housing prices, cultural permissiveness, the high-tech plant next door that offers no employment to the unskilled, and the influx of foreigners, even those "foreigners" who are East Germans or German ethnics coming in from Russia, Romania, or Poland. Adding the extremes of the Right and Left in Germany today, one arrives at an electoral potential of 10, or at the outside 15, percent, most of which is enveloped by the traditional parties. But that is no different from France, Britain, or Italy.

Anti-Semitism? *Measured* anti-Semitism is less in the Federal Republic than in some other Western countries.* But these figures must be taken with a grain of salt. First, anti-Semitism in Germany is still imbued with a powerful taboo—so powerful that respondents will undoubtedly conceal it from the professional pulse-takers. Second, there are scarcely any Jews left to hate in Germany. The Jewish community encompasses about 30,000 registered members, and there may be another 10,000 who do not proclaim their religious affiliation. That is a far cry from the 600,000 German Jews before the war. A more profound reason for the lack of visible anti-Semitism is the invisibility of the targets. Jews in West Germany do not occupy the prominent positions their expelled or slaughtered co-religionists held in the prewar period: as bankers, journalists, scientists, and academics.

Nonetheless, the obvious ought not be ignored. Anti-Semitism in the Federal Republic remains a cultural and political no-no, and when it raises its ugly head, it is swiftly slapped down, be it by the authorities or by published opinion.

East Germany, however, was quite different. There, the Communist regime started out in the late 1940's by simply absolving the "Worker and Peasant State" from all crimes; these, after all, had been committed by the "bad" Germans in the reactionary West. Thereafter, the regime faithfully followed every twist and turn of the anti-Semitic line laid down by Moscow—from Stalin's purges to the bureaucratic repression under Brezhnev, when anti-Semitism took on the convenient but no less vicious guise of anti-Zionism. Today, there are only a few hundred Jews in the GDR.

Yet this ugly tale comes with a semi-happy ending. On April 13, the GDR's parliament asked "the Jews in all the world for forgiveness"—for the "hypocrisy and hostility of official GDR policy against the state of Israel and for the persecution and degradation of Jews in our country even after 1945." Confessing "shame and grief," the East German parliament accepted responsibility for Nazi crimes and pledged material restitution—something the Communist regime had never done.

IV

On the verge of reunification, Germany does not look like that "strange and eerie place" so many worried observers descry as the precursor of the Fourth Reich. Indeed, in some respects, the Federal Republic is a more liberal polity than either France or Britain. Power is more diffused in the West German federal system (which will also be extended to the East) than in centralized France, and there is no Official Secrets Act that so hamstrings the press in Britain. (Keeping a state secret in Bonn is harder even than in Washington.) Compared with Helmut Kohl, Mrs. Thatcher enjoys almost dictatorial powers, and compared with the "republican monarchy" that is France, the Federal Republic is a political free-for-all. West German democracy, as the past forty years suggest, is not a fly-by-night operation that will vanish at the next economic downturn.

The problem lies elsewhere, and it stems not from the internal workings of the Federal Republic but from the external setting of a reunited Germany. The reassuring career of the Bonn Republic cannot be divorced from the ultra-stable European order installed after 1945—and which is going fast. The postwar order was built in and around Germany, and it had two functions. Explicitly, it was to contain the might of Soviet Russia; implicitly, it was to envelop the energies of a resurgent Germany. In historical terms, the postwar order was "just right": it protected Germany against others and against itself; it pulled the sting of Russian as well as of German power; and it achieved all this not by imposition and discrimination, but by community and integration. Paranoid nationalism cannot fester when

* In a four-country survey, fewer Germans expressed negative stereotypes about Jews than Austrians, Frenchmen, and Americans. Generally, anti-Semitism is higher in Austria than in West Germany. In 1952, 37 percent of a West German sample agreed to the proposition, "It is better for Germany to have no Jews in the country." In 1983, that proportion had declined to 9 percent. For an exhaustive survey of public attitudes, see Renate Köcher, *Deutsche und Juden vier Jahrzehnte danach* (Allensbach: Institut für Demoskopie). Data were collected in 1986.

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safety is assured within so cozy a framework. Yet with Russia receding and containing itself, as it were, the whole structure is losing its *raison d'être* and claim to allegiance.

With Russia retracting, Germany will become number one on the continent—willy-nilly and by sheer dint of economic clout and geographic position. Yet at this point, there is nothing to replace the *ancien système* that functioned so ingeniously to keep the dynamic part of Germany both happy and harnessed. To be sure, NATO and the European Community (EC) are still alive, while their Eastern counterparts, the Warsaw Pact and Comecon, are moving into the dustbin of history. On the other hand, if Russia turns inward for any length of time, NATO will not flourish and the EC will not become what its founding fathers envisioned: a West European common market blossoming into political union.

TAKE NATO. Add a united Germany,* factor in a democratic Eastern Europe, and subtract the Soviet threat. What do you get? Something called NATO, but which, successively, will be emptied of its reality. An alliance of democracies, it cannot resist what is gnawing at its sinews already—"competitive disarmament" in search of a "peace dividend." Ground-launched nuclear weapons—short-range missiles and nuclear artillery—will be the first to go. And in all fairness, it is hard to come up with a rationale for such weapons once their intended targets (Russian armies) are gone, leaving in place Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians who have neither the will nor the wherewithal to make a decent enemy. Nuclear weapons in a forward position, however, are not add-on frills but the very embodiment of America's security guarantee to Western Europe—and a brake on the acquisition of national deterrents.

For the core of the alliance is not so much the Washington Treaty of 1949 as NATO's flesh-and-steel arrangements on West German soil. The Federal Republic is home to 250,000 American troops, to 55,000 British and 50,000 French soldiers, and to Belgian, Dutch, and Canadian units. Except for the French, these and almost half-a-million West German troops are all integrated in a multinational command structure that is the essence of NATO. With the Russians withdrawing and the Warsaw Pact withering away, what would these forces do? Whom would they contain, especially once they had been whittled down to token contingents? Would they stand watch on the Elbe River—beyond which there is nothing left to guard? The point of these questions is to cast the cold light of realism on notions according to which NATO will persist while the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact disappear from the equation. An alliance is logically inseparable from the idea of a threat and a foe, and if the latter wanes, so will the former.

Today it is anybody's guess how many American troops will remain in Germany—and who else would take them once the Congress and/or the Germans decided they were no longer needed. The burden of a Great-Power role has never sat well on American shoulders; historically, at least, the task was only assumed when a nasty hegemonist lurked across the water: Kaiser Bill, Adolf Hitler, Hirohito, Joseph Stalin. Gorbachev, for the time being, does not quite fit that profile, and so George McGovern's 1972 campaign cry of "Come home, America" might finally come true. Yet few people realize how crucial America's role in Europe has been—not just as protector but also as pacifier, as the player who not only held off Stalin but also took the edge off the ancient rivalries that had embroiled Britain, France, and Germany in periodic war. With the United States ensconced in the system, there was suddenly a power greater than all of them that could ensure each against the perils of cooperation.

In that respect, NATO-builders Truman and Eisenhower were also the real founding fathers of the European Community. Yet the EC as we know it will not survive the cold war, either. Suitably reformed, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania have at least as much of a claim to entry as had Portugal and Greece. Why keep out Switzerland, Sweden, and Austria once the EC is no longer the economic core of a Western defense organization? One thing is certain. More members equal more heterogeneity which, in turn, will postpone political union *sine die*. With NATO reduced to a symbolic compact, and the EC to a European-wide free-trade zone, what will lend strength and resilience to a post-postwar Europe dominated by Germany?

While proclaiming fealty to NATO, German leaders in Bonn, Berlin, and Dresden already are speculating about "transcending the alliances." The vision is of an "all-European peace order" that would produce "collective security" in the framework of the 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).† That approach—effective sanctions by the peace-lovers against the aggressor—was last tried by the League of Nations when fascist Italy grabbed Abyssinia. (Haile Selassie went into exile, and the League went on to its unheralded demise.) "Collective security" is to alliance what a Dodge City posse is to the FBI—a somewhat haphazard attempt to make nations follow duty rather than self-interest.

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* The current scheme, favored by Bonn as well as its allies, is to incorporate all of Germany into NATO, but keep NATO troops out of East German territory. Accordingly, the GDR enters into NATO, but NATO does not enter into the GDR.

† The CSCE encompasses all the European nations plus the United States, Canada, and the Soviet Union. It lacks a secretariat and a structure, and it requires unanimity for all decisions. Since 1975, the CSCE has done some useful work on the periphery of classic security policy, e.g., by sponsoring "confidence-building measures" such as limits on military maneuvers and their timely announcement.

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Collective security is also the daily fare of the United Nations as it is asked to bring the world's weight to bear on Arabs and Israelis, Iraqis and Iranians, Khmer Rouge and rival Cambodians. It does not work today, as it did not work then, because nations are loath to sacrifice their *sacro egoismo* on the altar of abstract justice. Lofty as it is, the precept of "one for all, and all for one" has a fatal flaw: it requires nations to behave so virtuously as to render the mechanism of "collective security" unnecessary. The system *assumes* stability; it cannot create it.

V

If the old structures go, an "all-European peace order"—a.k.a. "collective security," where each is tied to all and thus to none—hardly will be able to assume the functions of the old regime. Which leads to the major question. If, as I have argued, the happy career of the Federal Republic was part and parcel of a sturdy postwar order, what will transpire inside the country once a mighty Germany bestrides a European stage that is no longer dominated by the old props and players?

The bet is (even odds, no more) that Germany will *not* become a "strange and eerie place." Once the horrendous costs of rehabilitating the East have been absorbed, the heirs to Wilhelm II, Weimar, and the Wehrmacht probably will use their clout less hesitantly than in the past. Nor will the Germans defer so frequently to allies and neighbors as a reduced demand for security cuts into their need for allegiance and as the burden of guilt feelings is lightened with each passing generation. But a replay of Wilhelm II or Adolf H.? Interstate rivalry in Europe—indeed, in the entire democratic-industrial world—has evolved onto more mercantile levels as the currency of military force has become devalued. Pearl Harbor is no longer bombed, but bought, by the Japanese. The Germans no longer invade the Alsace; they *pay* for choice plots there. And the Alsatian farmers would rather sell out to the *boches* than eke out a miserly living on lands rendered unprofitable by the EC bureaucracy in Brussels.

While the demise of the postwar order will liberate German power above all, a nation's power today is not measured by possession, but by the answer to questions such as: "Who determines parities in the European currency grid?" It so happens that it is the German Bundesbank, which grates hard on French monetary authorities, and understandably so. But this is still a different contest than was played out with German jackboots on the pavements of Paris fifty years ago. The battle lines are drawn in the balance-of-payments ledgers, and the accounts are settled with ECU's (the EC internal currency), not with blood and iron. The rivalry is acted out in an arena where joint welfare, not this or that province, is the stake—where your losses are not my gains, but where we both win and lose together. The victims of Sony may resent cheap VCR's made in Japan, but who would go to war over the privilege of buying worse-quality goods at higher prices? Americans may brandish military metaphors when it comes to Japan, but in truth they think about improving the educational and management system at home, not about sending the Marines into MITI.

The game of nations in the democratic-industrial world has changed, as have these nations themselves—including Germany. *"Nach Paris!"* today is not the battle cry of a Wehrmacht lieutenant departing Berlin Central in search of booty and glory, but the civilized request of an amorous German student buying a round-trip ticket in order to visit his French girlfriend. In such societies, given to the *individual* pursuit of happiness, the Pied Pipers of nationalism will not attract many followers.

But might not Germany unshackled hanker after nuclear weapons and push for the revision of its Eastern frontiers? That is impossible to exclude, but hard to imagine. The new, more civilized and civilianized game of nations offers the largest payoffs to nations such as Germany and Japan. The game has devalued the military chips, delivering power and prestige to those who can back up their bets with investments and loans. Why then should they forgo their advantage by changing the rules? In the attempt, they would certainly revive the hostile coalitions that proved their undoing in 1945. And one must assume that well-settled democracies are more sensible and sensitive about such risks than were the Hohenzollerns and the Hitlerites.

Soon Germany will be reunited. But the remake will not be shot with a cast of latter-day Erich von Stroheims. The sound track will not be the *Horst-Wessel-Lied*, the fighting song of the Nazis, but a reggae or rhythm-and-blues tune. Cologne and Kansas City, Munich and Marseilles, have been listening to the same beat for a long time; adding Dresden and Leipzig should not ruin that score. At least, we are entitled to hope so.

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The Hebrew Imperative

Ruth R. Wisse

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

EMMA LAZARUS'S sonnet, "The New Colossus," written in 1883 and affixed to the base of the Statue of Liberty in 1903, was an act of cultural appropriation. The French republicans who conceived the notion of a Statue of Liberty in the aftermath of the American Civil War; the sculptor and architect who designed the monument; and the people of France who presented it as a gift to the people of the United States—all had a very particular idea in mind. This was to be a statue of *liberty,* liberty seen as the quality common to *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* and "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It was to be an explicit testament to the common liberal hopes of Europe and America, the former now passing the torch of those hopes to the latter.

"Liberty Enlightening the World," as the statue was originally entitled, was iconographically quite complicated. The torch in the lady's right hand (which for a time did practical duty as a lighthouse) represented the flame of reason which had sparked the Enlightenment and ignited the French Revolution. The tablets in her left hand linked the American Declaration of Independence to the Tablets of the Law at Sinai, while her majestic crown of thorns or rays evoked both martyred Christ and prophetic Moses.

In all, the Statue of Liberty marked the triumph of a modern political ideal; nothing in her features or physical properties suggested maternity, and no one looking into her eyes could imagine them mild. It took Emma Lazarus to turn Liberty into the Mother of Exiles. Herself a highly acculturated American Jew who probably had been made aware of Jewish homelessness through a reading of George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda,* she watched the statue going up in New York harbor as she helped tend to the flood of Russian Jewish refugees newly arrived at Wards Island. To her, America was no extension of Europe but, for all those fleeing poverty and pogroms, a welcoming *alternative* to Europe. (Palestine was another such place of refuge, and she was for the same reason a Zionist.) Emma Lazarus's understanding of liberty was also shaped by the biblical Exodus, with its practical gloss on what liberty requires. Because America is free, she reasoned, it must open its golden door to unfortunates, and the opening of the golden door to unfortunates is what makes America free.

As it fell out, so true to the *American* spirit was Emma Lazarus's Jewish interpretation that her small words at the foot of the statue came utterly to redefine the massive icon. A product of the very welcome its words proclaimed, the sonnet reimagined the Statue of Liberty not just for Jews but for all Americans. The Jewish author of this poem felt sufficiently at home not merely to express the nature of her country with Emersonian authority, but to speak in her country's name. Pointless to ask whether this is a Jewish or an American poem: the American voice is thoroughly Jewish, and the Jewish expression is avowedly American.

What is true of Emma Lazarus is true in general. Other countries forced upon Jews a choice of loyalties, exacting from them a price in ethnic distinctiveness in return for the privilege of citizenship; America did not. And so the vast majority of immigrant Jews, like most immigrants, readily considered the country not *yenems,* someone else's, but their own. American Jewish culture, indeed, arose out of the creative fusion of

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the Anglo-American and the Jewish traditions; in many cases the process of that fusion began even before an immigrant landed on America's shores.

Consider the eponymous hero of Abraham Cahan's novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917). Levinsky is one of those destitute young men fleeing persecution whom Emma Lazarus set out to welcome. Crossing the Atlantic as "one of a multitude of steerage passengers on a Bremen steamship," he is still a traditional religious Jew who prays three times a day, says grace after meals and a prayer before going to sleep. But now the sanctity of the texts he knows by heart takes on the quality of personal experience:

> My scanty luggage included a pair of phylacteries and a plump little prayer-book, with the Book of Psalms at the end. The prayers I knew by heart, but I now often said psalms, in addition, particularly when the sea looked angry and the pitching or rolling was unusually violent. . . . For it seemed as though the familiar words had changed their identity and meaning, especially those concerned with the sea. Their divine inspiration was now something visible and audible.

As he approaches land, the young Levinsky feels yet another connection, this one between himself, the immigrant Jew, and the pilgrims who had founded his soon-to-be home:

> When the discoverers of America saw land at last they fell on their knees and a hymn of thanksgiving burst from their souls. The scene, which is one of the most thrilling in history, repeats itself in the heart of every immigrant as he comes in sight of the American shores. I am at a loss to convey the peculiar state of mind that the experience created in me.

Two features about this immigrant Jew that would have made him alien in any European country—namely, his religious faith and the fact that he was in flight from persecution—are precisely what qualify him as a true American, recalling and recapitulating the route traversed generations earlier by America's founders.

Of course, Levinsky, who goes on to become a successful businessman torn by intellect and conscience, is a fictional character, and Abraham Cahan's astonishing gifts as a cultural mediator are greatly in evidence in the passages I have cited. Cahan, the legendary editor of New York's Yiddish newspaper the *Jewish Daily Forward,* wrote *The Rise of David Levinsky* in English, in order to calm some of the nativist fears aroused by the flood of Jewish immigrants. In the novel he shows that a Jew, though he may pray in a different language, and out of a strange little book, not only respects the myth of America, but can revitalize it.

Cahan believed this as devoutly as does his character Levinsky: for half a century under his editorship, the *Forward,* the most successful foreign-language daily of its day, was the chief instrument of its readers' Americanization. It taught them American history, introduced them to American customs, offered advice on behavior and attitudes, and (to the consternation of Yiddish writers and intellectuals) promoted the use of English. Simultaneously, through his stories and novels in English, Cahan introduced America to the Jews.

These were not happy works, because Jewish immigrant life was troubled and problematic. But the troubles and problems were also typically American. *The Rise of David Levinsky,* for example, bears a striking resemblance to William Dean Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham,* the tale of a New Englander beset by analogous conflicts between the drive to succeed and the claims of conscience. Cahan was confident that Americans could be made to feel comfortable with the Jews as the Jews got comfortable with America, because he was convinced of their common purpose. Again, pointless to ask whether *Levinsky* is a Jewish or an American novel: its Jewish character is an American archetype, and in its narrative texture the strands of style and language that are traceable to its diverse sources have blended into a unified whole.

The same holds for all the best products of American Jewish culture, past and present. Like children who sometimes resemble one parent more than they do another, these works may seem to derive more from one side or another of their fused inheritance, but who would want to separate them into their genetic influences? Anyway, the task has only become hopelessly complicated over time. Contemporary novels like Saul Bellow's *Mister Sammler's Planet* or Johanna Kaplan's *O My America!* respond to American culture as it has been, by now, shaped by the Jews themselves, among others. Nor, by now, are Jews themselves any longer the trustiest carriers of *Jewish* values and themes. If asked to reconstruct the "Jewish" moral imagination on the basis of American fiction, for example, I would go to the Protestant John Updike sooner than to the Jewish E.L. Doctorow; not only is Updike closer in his view of life to Jewish tradition, he has more interesting things to say about the Jews.

Yet I would be wrong to look to American literature in the first place for traits that would serve the purposes of a specifically Jewish cultural identity. The Jewish community may take pride in the contributions of its writers and artists to American culture, but once the Jewish elements have fused into a work they cannot be extricated or even, sometimes, located. In this sense Philip Roth and Saul Bellow and the late Bernard Malamud have been correct to voice discomfort with the Jewish label that has

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been placed on their work. Not that they would ever deny their own Jewishness, or the plain influence of Yiddish on the cadences of their language, or the fact that their characters and their subject matter and even their themes are often recognizably Jewish. But no matter how much of the Jew goes into the making of the American work, that work contains at least as much linguistic, narrative, and thematic material from other sources, and in any case the whole is directed toward the independent ends of fiction. No one will learn Yiddish from Saul Bellow's *Herzog*. The Jewish family will not be strengthened by a reading of *Portnoy's Complaint*. A child cannot absorb Jewishness the way Malamud's protagonist does from a Jewish grocer in *The Assistant*.

It is, of course, tempting to believe otherwise—and indeed some Jews have tried to use American Jewish literature as a means of shoring up their own and their community's sense of identity. But they have invariably ended in disappointment with the texts themselves for failing to live up to what is expected of them. If only (they rail) our writers would become more authentically Jewish; if only they were steeped in Hebrew and Yiddish and Talmud, suffused with the love of Israel, tolerant of their fellow Jews; if only they would set themselves against assimilation—then their work would surely help, would it not?, to maintain and strengthen Jewish life.

The answer is no, it would not, and it could not. Herman Wouk and Cynthia Ozick, two very different writers who are alike in being extraordinarily cultivated Jews, have explicitly taken a stand against assimilation in their work. The hero of Wouk's novel *Inside, Outside* is a senior White House aide who studies Talmud and does what he can to help Israel; in fascinating detail Wouk sets out the formative choices such a Jew must make in America. In *The Cannibal Galaxy*, Cynthia Ozick explores the mystery of education that is so central to the historic Jewish experience, and as part of that inquiry she tests the idea of the "dual curriculum," which is precisely the hope that a marriage of Jewish and Western sources can produce a modern, integrated Jew.

Reading these books entertains and enriches us. But what can either novel possibly contribute to Jewishness other than to organize our feelings and perhaps point us in a direction? Implicitly, the fiction of both these authors warns against mistaking the culture they are producing for the authentic works of Jewish law and faith from which (again, in very different ways) they derive their themes. Cynthia Ozick in particular is creatively obsessed with paganism and the making of idols, a category in which she includes the modern literary vocation itself. But even Ozick's fiction, with its self-denying (and somewhat ambiguous) warning against the false promise of culture, cannot sustain or invigorate Jewishness.

An essential condition of modern culture is freedom, the freedom of the consumer as well as of the creator. The writer may lead his characters into church or under the *ḥupe*, the Jewish wedding canopy; the reader may buy the book or not, and having bought it, may leave it unread. Modern culture is a matter of personal taste. This applies (though in a complicated way) to Yiddish and Hebrew literature no less than to literature in English. A generation ago many Yiddish writers and readers believed that the culture being produced in their language would be sufficient to nurture the Jewish people worldwide. But somehow the grandeur of the inheritance has been lost on their children, many of whom have filled the shelves of the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, with a million unread copies of the books their parents cherished.

Modern culture rejects pledges of allegiance, daily prayer. Yet this is what the process of meaningful transmission finally comes down to. A single Yiddish poem, even a single word—God, Israel—repeated once a day, because one feels directed to do so, can help guarantee the survival of a people. Contrarily, all the world's great books can be discounted as yesterday's junk so long as one does not consider oneself bound by duty to inscribe them on the minds of one's children and one's children's children.

THE Jews are not a simple people, and their teachings cannot be summarized in a mantra. When I suggest that not choice but obligation, even to the daily recitation of a single word, is necessary for cultural survival, I hardly mean that the obligation is minimal. One of the reasons for the steady disappearance of so large a percentage of Jews throughout history is surely the difficulty and the complexity of Jewish religious civilization, and the burdens it places on membership. If anything, it is easier for a Jew to yield up his particularism in America than elsewhere precisely because America, unlike other diasporas, shares so many of the basic human values of the Jews.

The point is this: the openness and freedom provided by the American polity and its modern culture permit maximal self-expression to ethnic and religious communities while also encouraging their undifferentiated participation in the community at large. Where the Jews are concerned, it has already become clear to at least some observers that the ensuing process of acculturation must end with their collective disappearance. In a recent article, the Israeli literary critic Gershon Shaked has offered the tempting analogy of the Jewish community of ancient Alexandria, where Jews developed a remarkable culture in the Greek language and so successfully integrated themselves as to become almost totally assimilated into their environment.

Shaked thinks that the English language will

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swallow American Jews just as Greek swallowed the Jews of Alexandria. In a sense, his parallel does not go far enough, because on this continent the Jews are at home as they never were in ancient Egypt. Although some Alexandrian Jews were permitted to assume Greek citizenship, their political status remained a provisional one, not something that even at the best of times they could think themselves entitled to. More importantly, Hellenistic culture was seen by the Jews as other, *akher,* while in America a Jewish component was already implicitly present in the culture before Jews in large numbers had even begun to arrive. No other civilization has ever offered Jews the reciprocal opportunity of assuming a national identity they are at the same time entitled to shape. One simply cannot imagine an Alexandrian Jew undertaking to redefine the Colossus of Rhodes as Emma Lazarus did the New Colossus.

But this unique American hospitality may pose an even greater challenge to continued Jewish distinctiveness than Shaked imagines—the more so because, by now, most native American Jews have had their slates wiped almost clean of commandments, customs, and observances. Most young Jews in particular no longer have the option of maintaining or abrogating the "golden chain" of Jewish tradition; if they wished to retrieve that tradition, they would, like mountaineers, have to toss a roped hook across a chasm and inch their way across.

In an episode of the series *thirtysomething,* television's tribute to the maturing generation of the 60's, the Jewish character Michael wanders around a synagogue during the Christmas and Hanukkah season hoping to be touched by some compelling idea or emotion that might counteract the tree his Christian wife has introduced into their home. With no apparent understanding of the meaning of the Jewish holiday, and lacking a coherent Jewish way of life, Michael is Jewish by virtue of the self-pity he feels as the member of a minority within a culturally still-Christian environment. In deference to his wistfulness, his tender wife lights a Menorah alongside the tree.

Now, suppose a Jew like Michael should come to feel the urgent claim upon him of Jewish religion and nationhood. He would have voluntarily to reimpose on himself and on his children a burden of which his parents and grandparents tried valiantly to free him. He would have to do this, moreover, in full view of his fellow Americans (and even of the Gentile to whom he may be joined in marriage), and without shirking his obligations or minimizing his cultural identity as an American. While it might be some comfort to know that in a nation of immigrants his predicament was not unique, for a Jew like Michael such an act of self-perpetuation would nevertheless require an enormous effort of will.

This is not to say that such an effort is entirely out of the realm of possibility; on the public level it is even, partly, in evidence, at least to judge by the wealth of books currently being published on Jewish religious and cultural topics. American Jews have brought into English almost all their required Jewish texts. Bible and prayer book have long since been translated, and now, thanks to Adin Steinsaltz, the Talmud itself is being made available, set out on the English page just as it is in the Aramaic original, true to both content and all-important form. If Michael were so inclined, he could walk into a bookstore for the inspiration and information he seeks vainly in the synagogue; there he would find Maimonides and the Jewish mystics, as well as guides to Maimonides and the mystics. So much Jewish scholarship is now written in English that it will soon be, if it is not already, a required language for anyone in the world entering the field of Jewish studies.

But there is a problem here. Judaism in English lacks the dimension of historical time, without which there is no Jewish people. The Torah scroll in the Ark is written in Hebrew, and those who can read it are rightly recognized by those who cannot as more "authentically" Jewish. Access to the sources has always been a key to status within Jewish life; there is not a Jew in America who does not sense this intuitively. Reform and Conservative congregations that take their religion seriously feel, rightly, in a defensive position on this point; and the more seriously they take their religion, the more painful they must find it to confront their ignorance. In practice, the acceptance of English as a substitute for Hebrew in such congregations has had a cumulatively weakening effect. English was admitted in order to make Jews feel comfortable in the synagogue, to make them participants rather than observers in prayer and study. Yet English also ensures that they will remain forever marginal, unable to become full participants in prayer and study.

Similarly, a Jewish child who is obliged to master a section of the Torah in Hebrew by the end of the first grade in his Sunday or afternoon religious school will know exactly what distinguishes him from his non-Jewish neighbors: the ability to read the Torah in Hebrew by the end of first grade. But more often, the school this child attends will require no such effort of mastery, but will rely instead on a curriculum based on the teaching of "values." Thus the typical American Jewish child will learn that Jews are particularly concerned for the welfare of other human beings, for trees and for animals, and for whatever else is deemed ethically important at the moment. The intelligent child will also learn to dismiss this unwelcome and presumptuous effort to separate him artificially from his Gentile fellow-Americans, who are patently no less kind and no less sensitive than he.

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David Schearl, the hypersensitive child protagonist of Henry Roth's great novel *Call It Sleep* (1934), attends a primitive *heder* on the Lower East Side of New York where an ill-tempered teacher with no other means of authority at his disposal tries to whip his students into attentiveness. Yet although David is taught the Hebrew Bible by rote under the worst possible conditions of pedagogy, nevertheless the words of Isaiah, dimly understood, set his imagination afire, and inspire him with the confidence to seek his own salvation. By contrast, Ozzie Freeman, the child protagonist of Philip Roth's story "The Conversion of the Jews," likewise uncomprehending of the Hebrew he is taught by rote in his Sunday school, is driven wild with anger by the "soul-battering" of the modern rabbi who uses the pretense of free discussion to suggest that the Jews have something other people lack. Given the scarcity of good teachers in any system, the teaching of the Hebrew Bible and post-biblical literature remains a wise objective for Jewish educators. Hebrew alone can give a child unmediated access to his heritage. English leaves him forever at the mercy of second-rate interpreters.

Hebrew is not the Jews' heritage alone; early American educators made it a requirement of the general and the Christian curriculum. But of Jewish literacy Hebrew is the basic or minimal requirement. An *ideal* of Jewish cultural literacy would have to include Yiddish as well as Hebrew, Aramaic for Talmud study, and, depending on intellectual ambition, any of eighteen or so Jewish languages that preserve folkways and lore from earliest times to the present. But Hebrew, always the main artery of a self-renewing Jewish tradition, is the indispensable thread that binds all Jewish languages to their biblical source.

If Judaism in English is without a focus in time, it is also without a focus in space; and without such a focus, once again, there is no Jewish people. From a strictly pragmatic point of view, English seems to satisfy the demands of Jews for a common international language of discourse, since more Jews on more continents speak it today than any other language. There is ample testimony to this at international Jewish gatherings, in Tel Aviv as well as New York. But the statistical fate of Jews throughout history, and particularly in our time, makes it dangerous to rely on such data.

Against all odds, statistical and otherwise, Jews in this century have effected a linguistic revolution virtually unprecedented in the history of the world. Yiddish, once the vernacular of over three-fourths of world Jewry, spoken at the outbreak of World War II by more Jews than have ever spoken a Jewish language at any time, is now almost a relic of the past. At the same time, Hebrew has been spectacularly resurrected as a living national language. Yiddish was an immense treasurehouse of national culture, and its loss has been far more serious to the Jewish people than the loss of a single limb to a human body. Nonetheless, although for centuries it was the safeguard of Jewish life in Europe, Yiddish was never the language of *all* the Jews in space and time. The deeper logic of peoplehood required the generative powers of Hebrew, for it alone could provide for the Bnei Israel of India and the Jews of Morocco as well as for the Hasidim of Belz.

In 1951, when the wondrous aspects of the Hebrew revival were still undimmed by custom, the Canadian Jewish poet A.M. Klein visited Israel to witness the miracle for himself. The autobiographical protagonist of his novel *The Second Scroll* (1951), though much impressed by the poets he encounters in the land, is truly overwhelmed by the creative inventiveness of the populace at large:

> They were not members of literary societies, the men who were giving new life to the antique speech, but merchants, tradesmen, day laborers. In their daily activity, and without pose or flourish, they showed it to be alive again, the shaping Hebrew imagination. An insurance company, I observed as I lingered in Tel Aviv's commercial center, called itself *Sneh*—after Moses' burning bush which had burned and burned but had not been consumed. Inspired metaphor, born not of the honored laureate, but of some actuary, a man of prose! A well-known brand of Israeli sausage was being advertised, it gladdened my heart to see, as *Bashan*—just tribute to its magnum size, royal compliment descended from Og, Bashan's giant king. A dry-cleaner called his firm *Keshet,* the rainbow, symbol of cessation of floods! An ice-cream organization, Kortov, punned its way to custom fissioning *kurtov,* a drop, to *kor-tov,* cold and good. In my student days I had been fascinated always by that word which put an end to the irreconcilable controversies of the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai: this House would maintain *Permitted,* that House would insist *Prohibited;* a deadlock would ensue. Came then the Talmud editor and wrote *taiku, stet,* the question abides. My teacher would then go on to explain that *taiku* was really a series of initials that stood for *Tishbi yetaraitz kushioth u'baayoth,* the Tishbite [Elijah] would resolve all problems and difficulties. Now the magic cataleptic word was before me again, in a new context, in a newspaper, the report of a football game where the score had been tied. *Taiku!*

Klein's lifelong and lonely effort as a poet to fashion a high Anglo-Jewish style made him exceptionally appreciative of its opposite, the spontaneous eruption of a national language. In this case he could simultaneously savor the creative enterprise and his own ability to participate in it through a creative response. Had he not known Hebrew, he could not have experienced the miracle.

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The kindly, hospitable outreach of English cannot compete with or substitute for the centripetal energy of Hebrew in the national life of the Jews. And there is another aspect to be considered, a special problem which no other modern nation has had to face. Launched in history as the chosen children of God, the Jews have become singled out in the modern period by successive ideologies of hatred. Just as Christianity and Islam once defined themselves in negative relation to Judaism, and fitted Jews with the historical role of tolerated or despised prey, so in modern times the Jews have been targeted by an astounding variety of emerging nation-states and ideological movements as the main threat to some positive identity or ideal. Today the portmanteau Jew still personifies the negative principle of liberalism and modernization to most of the Arab world, just as he did in the earlier part of the century to many segments of European society. I am not speaking here of the "normal" antipathy that people of one religion or race or nationality may feel for another, but of the calculated use of the Jews as a political foil.

Election by other nations as the focus of political opposition and ideological hatred is humiliating, degrading, and damaging to the spirit as well as threatening to the body. As love nurtures, so hatred deforms. The campaign of discreditation launched by anti-Semitic regimes from the czars to the Nazis and beyond has smeared Jews in their own eyes as much as in the eyes of others, and has affected them everywhere, not just in those places where the propaganda happens to originate. There is no way of turning this hatred to advantage. Jews who think they can thrive on crisis, or who take pride in the discrimination practiced against them as if it were an inverted honor, are suffering from the poison they have been fed.

Jews have to work harder than others if they are to withstand the efforts to destroy them and if in doing so they wish to remain even partially subject to their own authority. Otherwise, whether through the mechanisms of appeasement or defiance, they will begin to function as the puppets of their antagonists. The defense forces that Israel calls upon to protect it from Arab assaults are not strong enough to shield the battered soul. National dignity under these conditions can only come from deep self-knowledge and self-respect, which have to be acquired and learned.

Hebrew is the intimate part of Jewish nationhood representing the sovereignty of the Jews as a people and the will of the Jews to sovereignty. This is not to suggest that Hebrew is inviolable: the language of sovereignty can be used for purposes much less charming than those described by A.M. Klein; it can even be used as a tool to attack that sovereignty. Although it is the common bond of religion and nationhood, Hebrew cannot guarantee the uses to which it will be put. But at the very least, it allows Jews outside Israel to participate meaningfully, directly, in the culture of their people. Given the long struggle they may still be facing before the state of Israel is accepted by its neighbors as an unexceptional fact, Jews sorely require experiential proof of what their enemies try so hard to deny them. That proof had best be on the tips of their tongues.

It is paradoxically true, however, that any argument for Hebrew as a Jewish imperative must turn back with fresh gratitude to the hospitality of English. The Jews are too small to be self-sustaining in the world, and less than ever in the late 20th century can they afford the deceptive comforts of a ghetto. Those Jews who still wait for the Messiah to decide their fate may immure themselves behind the hundred gates of Jerusalem's Mea Shearim quarter, but all the rest of Jewry in Israel and outside Israel, the part that intends to reside within the family of nations, has to learn how to negotiate and to survive. English is essential to that negotiation and that survival. It is the major international language in every sphere from technology to diplomacy, and of intellectual-cultural discourse worldwide. It is also the language of the United States, and even if there were no Jews in America, the support of the largest democracy would be necessary in what is still a struggle for basic acceptance.

Culturally, too, as well as politically, the Jews are too small to be self-sustaining. Of all the peoples in the world, Jews have maintained the most prolonged, intense, confident interaction with others, and it would be hard to name a language that has offered them quite so much knowledge, civility, and liberalizing enhancement as English. If the Jews cannot remain a viable people in time and space without drawing upon the linguistic source of their peoplehood, neither in the modern world can they remain a significant people without command of English.

Paradox noted, then. But if English is essential to survival, it is not, in itself, sufficient, even in the happy conditions of the United States. Here, freed of the coercive pressures that have habitually cramped them, Jews can decide for themselves whether they value their civilization enough to preserve and perpetuate it. For those purposes, recourse to Hebrew is indispensable.

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Narcissus Goes to School

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

SEVEN years ago, Americans were warned that a "rising tide of mediocrity" threatened to drown their schools, their children, and their nation. Although that tide has scarcely ebbed, today it is being swelled by another huge wave: a tsunami of artificial self-esteem.

Of course, almost everyone in the field of education has come to hold precisely the opposite premise—namely, that the great problem is a *lack* of self-esteem. Thus in California, the opening days of the new decade brought the final report of the state's "Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility." In three-plus years of labor, this 26-member bipartisan panel, established at the behest of veteran legislator John Vasconcellos, remained unintimidated by multiple *Doonesbury* cartoons lampooning it as "the first official study of New-Age thinking." At the conclusion of its labors, the task force grandiloquently declared that "The lack of self-esteem is central to most personal and social ills plaguing our state and nation as we approach the end of the 20th century."

In line with this declaration, the task force ascribed near-magical powers to self-esteem, characterizing it as "something that empowers us to live responsibly and that inoculates [*sic*] us against the lures of crime, violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, child abuse, chronic welfare dependency, and educational failure." In the education chapter of its report, the panel developed eleven recommendations, including required "course work in self-esteem" for all educators seeking credentials and the integration of self-esteem into the "total curricula" of every school and district. Meanwhile Vasconcellos, described by aides as "the Johnny Appleseed of self-esteem," has begun stumping the land promoting the task-force recommendations and urging that candidates' positions on self-esteem be used as a political litmus test for such posts as mayor and school superintendent.

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Self-esteem via curriculum reform has also recently become the focus of attention on the other side of the continent. In mid-February, the New York Board of Regents endorsed the recommendations of the State Education Commissioner, Thomas Sobol, concerning some controversial ideas for changing the course content of schools throughout the Empire State. Sobol was responding to the report of yet another task force—this one on minorities—that he himself had empaneled in 1987 for the purpose of reviewing the state's curriculum and instructional materials "to see if they adequately reflect the pluralistic nature of our society."

This 17-member task force, consisting primarily of minority-group members, retained additional "experts" to advise and assist it in the preparation of its report, entitled "A Curriculum of Inclusion." To no one's surprise, the panel spotted plenty of grave flaws in need of urgent rectification. "African Americans, Asian Americans, Puerto Ricans/Latinos, and Native Americans have all been the victims of an intellectual and educational oppression," due in no small part to curricula with "a terribly damaging effect on the psyche of young people." The good news, however, is that if the task force's wide-ranging recommendations are followed, minority youngsters "will have higher self-esteem and self-respect, while children from European cultures will have a less arrogant perspective. . . ."

In seeking the Regents' consent to proceed in this direction—a consent that was unanimously granted—Sobol used cooler language to embrace the central psychodynamic premise of the task force. "We know," the commissioner asserted, "that if children are to achieve they must trust their teachers and feel good about themselves." This condition, he assured his board, would be created through "curricula and teaching which represent children's backgrounds, which help them discover more about themselves and people like them. . . ."

Self-esteem in California, feeling good about oneself in New York. And more of the same across the land. The director of elementary schools in Fulton County, Georgia, avers that "high self-esteem is a prerequisite for high academic achievement and success in life." Governor William

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Schaefer appoints a 23-member self-esteem task force for his state of Maryland. "Self-esteem citizens' groups" are said to be active in Missouri, New Mexico, and Florida. Michigan has a "Teenage Council on Self-Esteem." The National Education Association tells its two million members that schools "must structure esteem-building into the curriculum. They must modify the school culture to eliminate any negative effect it may be having on students."

Since every education fad quickly spawns its own interest groups, there now exist both a National Council for Self-Esteem and a Foundation for Self-Esteem. It is rare to pick up a copy of an education journal without finding several articles on the subject, and rarer still to attend any of the innumerable conferences the profession holds each year without stumbling into rooms full of people solemnly discussing how best to foster self-esteem in children. The next generation of educators is getting similar messages in college. "Elementary-school teachers are being taught," reports Rita Kramer after an extended examination of teacher-education programs around the nation, "to concern themselves with children's feelings of self-worth and not with the worth of hard work or of realistically measured achievement."

Some of this, as the cartoonist Garry Trudeau suggested in his *Doonesbury* spoofs, reveals the infiltration of formal education by New-Age thinking, with its notion of transcending one's limitations (and, if necessary, objective reality itself) by soaking in an appropriate blend of sun, love, selfhood, and otherness. To this influence we can probably trace the origins of such efforts as Los Angeles's "Square-Foot Gardening" project, described by the school system as "designed to increase 750 students' self-esteem and awareness of ecological and environmental concerns by allowing them to put together and manage a garden on the campus of Van Nuys Elementary School." The same sort of sensibility was at work in a recent Sacramento "self-esteem seminar" where, as reported in the New York *Times*, "thirty teachers were led through a series of motivational exercises that began with the students massaging their classmates' shoulders, to relax the group and create a bond."

Beneath the goofiness, however, are two important assumptions about formal education itself. The first is that self-esteem is a desirable personal acquisition which can and should be purposefully cultivated by the schools, much like physical health, reasoning skills, scientific prowess, and good character.

The second is that self-esteem is also a means to other ends, functioning in relation to the mind somewhat as an essential amino acid operates within the biochemistry of the body. Just as we suppose that children will be less likely to succeed academically if they lack enough sleep, or a full belly, or a sufficiency of pencils, so we are asked to believe that youngsters who do not feel good about themselves will similarly fare poorly in school.

Contemporary American educators instinctively adhere to both assumptions. Unfortunately, however, there is no solid basis for believing that either is correct. Self-esteem, it emerges from a vast body of research, is a much more slippery and elusive phenomenon than its zealous promoters may realize. It is subject to conflicting definitions, some involving fundamental distinctions—notably between the very different concepts of "self-worth" and "personal efficacy." Levels of self-esteem are far from easy to measure, and even after we obtain data, they turn out to correlate only slightly with other desirable qualities that task forces and teacher-training classes hope to foster. Many of the statistical relationships are actually negative.

Summarizing the research literature for the California self-esteem task force, in the introduction to a scholarly volume (*The Social Importance of Self-Esteem*) published in tandem with the panel report, the distinguished Berkeley sociologist Neil J. Smelser had this glum comment:

> One of the disappointing aspects of every chapter in this volume . . . is how low the associations between self-esteem and its consequences are in research to date. In some cases, consistent relationships are found. . . . Sometimes, however, the associations run in unexpected directions. . . . The news most consistently reported, however, is that the associations between self-esteem and its expected consequences are mixed, insignificant, or absent. . . . If the association between self-esteem and behavior is so often reported to be weak, even less can be said for the causal relationship between the two. . . . [T]o put the matter more simply, the scientific efforts to establish those connections that we are able to acknowledge and generate from an intuitive point of view do not reproduce those relations.

This is a damning thing to say in a volume meant to provide scientific backing for the conclusions of a task force urging hugely increased attention to self-esteem. Several dissenting panel members noted this paradox. But responsible social science seldom has much influence over minds dominated by other agendas.

To be sure, education was one of the areas in which Smelser and his colleagues did report a positive association between self-esteem and its expected consequences. Yet these correlations were quite low, accounting for less than 5 percent of variation in student achievement, and the causal link was obscure. It is as likely that heightened self-esteem flows from academic achievement as that improved achievement is caused by self-esteem; indeed, many other studies have come to this very conclusion. It is also quite possible—again,

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as many studies suggest—that the two attributes vary together, neither pulling the other but, rather, both affected in similar fashion by independent influences such as innate ability, social class, and prior accomplishment.

HISTORY is often a more reliable guide than social science, and in looking back at the American past one can hardly miss the influence on our national character of attitudes that resemble self-esteem even if nobody then knew the phrase. Leaving behind them the deterministic religions and caste-paralyzed societies of the Old World, those who came to these shores and then pushed on—first into the West, eventually into space—sensed that social, economic, and physical mobility depended largely on one's own talent, energy, and application, and that practically anything was possible if one believed in oneself and worked hard enough.

The realization that good things came to—and were accomplished by—individuals with faith in their own abilities fostered an array of organized efforts to imbue people with confidence. These ranged from individual psychotherapy to religious revivalism, and involved figures as varied as William James and Mary Baker Eddy, Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale, Erik Erikson and Kurt Hahn. Donald Meyer has called them "positive thinkers," practitioners of "mind cure," an activity by means of which Americans were encouraged to look within themselves for antidotes to whatever discontents they might have.

What such efforts have demonstrated is that in small doses "mind cure" can be effective. With proper encouragement, a reasonable mix of incentives, rewards, and punishments, and a sprinkling of will-power, most people can do more and better than they initially supposed. The "little engine that could" is a classic of children's bedtime reading not just because it has a happy ending but also because it attests to "the power of positive thinking." Eugene Lang's "I Have a Dream" program, and its many imitators around the country, do excellent work with disadvantaged youngsters not so much by assisting them to dream as by encouraging them to strive and to attain heights they had not thought within their reach.

On the far side of those mental peaks, however, lies a treacherous canyon. It begins where what one thinks about oneself starts to diverge from reality, where dreams get confused with fact, where optimism about the future turns into delusions about the past. It is the disorder we know as narcissism, defined in the psychopathology textbooks as "persistent and unrealistic overvaluation of one's own importance and achievements."

By now the "culture of narcissism"—to borrow Christopher Lasch's famous phrase—has come to supply much of what passes for guiding precepts in the field of education. "The main thing," Rita Kramer reports a student-teacher as saying, "is for them to feel good about themselves as readers"—this, by way of explaining a decision not to introduce her second graders to any words they did not already know. It is not surprising that this woman's classmates and professor beamed at her explanation. "Teachers generally seem to accept the modern dogma," the psychologist Barbara Lerner has written, "that self-esteem is the critical variable for intellectual development—the master key to learning."

The doors that key is now unlocking reveal little real learning—though one already finds tons of self-esteem. The most notorious example of this discrepancy is the 1988 international-achievement test on which American thirteen-year-olds got the lowest score in mathematics proficiency but, when asked whether they judged themselves to be good at math, awarded themselves the highest rating in the world.

Harold W. Stevenson's pioneering comparative research has found essentially the same amazing gap between actual accomplishment and self-evaluation:

> When asked to rate such characteristics as ability in mathematics, brightness, and scholastic performance, American children gave themselves the highest ratings, while Japanese students gave themselves the lowest. . . . When asked how well they would do in mathematics in high school, 58 percent of American fifth graders said they expected to be above average or among the best students. These percentages were much higher than those of their Chinese and Japanese peers, among whom only 26 and 29 percent, respectively, were this optimistic.

"Doing bad and feeling good," the columnist Charles Krauthammer recently called it in a trenchant essay.

THE schools are in significant measure responsible for this bizarre discrepancy. Cheery report cards convey favorable grades and reassuring comments. Parent conferences are almost always upbeat. Promotion to the next grade is guaranteed, as is a diploma, so long as one clocks enough time in school, with assured admission to the state college down the road.

Conversely, according to the prevailing wisdom, there should be no competition in the classroom, no tracking of youngsters by ability or attainment, no obliging anyone to attend summer school, and, above all, no uniform standard to which the hated "standardized tests" might be aligned. "It doesn't matter what you do, but who you are," is the message one recent graduate told a newspaper reporter that he had received from his high-school "self-esteem" course.

"When the self-esteem movement takes over a school," wrote John Leo in a perceptive column in *U.S. News & World Report*, "teachers are under pressure to accept every child as is. To keep children feeling good about themselves, you must

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avoid all criticism and almost any challenge that could conceivably end in failure."

No wonder American youngsters think they are doing well. But it is not just the students who inhabit a world of illusory accomplishment. So do their parents. Stevenson and his associates found that nine out of ten American mothers were satisfied with their children's current academic performance—a far higher proportion than mothers in Asia, who had far better reason to be satisfied.

American educators are not trying to dupe students or their parents. On the contrary: the professional culture that encourages them to make children feel good about their performance has also persuaded *them* that the schools are in sound shape. Recent surveys make plain that the overwhelming majority of today's educators—a mind-boggling 92 percent in the case of teachers—think their present schools are doing a good or excellent job.

Self-esteem levels, then, are already so high that it is hard to understand why anyone would think they need to be further inflated. According to the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, 80 percent of the high-school graduating class of 1988 "take a positive attitude" toward themselves, 83 percent judge themselves to be "person[s] of worth," 79 percent claim to be generally satisfied with themselves, and 74 percent *disagree* with the statement, "I feel I do not have much to be proud of" (only 15 percent agree with it).

This senior class of 1988 was made up of the same young people among whom, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only one in twenty could read at a level of sophistication needed for college-level work, only 26 percent could write an adequate persuasive letter, and a third did not know that the Mississippi River flows into the Gulf of Mexico.

With such dismal achievement on the one hand, and millions of contented, self-satisfied, even smug, youngsters on the other, what could possibly lead serious grown-ups to the conclusion that the root of the nation's education problem lies in a deficit of self-esteem?

WHERE black children in particular are concerned, the suspicion that lagging achievement is linked to low self-esteem can be traced back to several studies in the early 1950's, notably the famous "doll" experiment conducted by the psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark in which black children favored light-skinned dolls, leading to the conclusion that they had a low opinion of blacks and therefore, presumably, of themselves. This was believed to contribute to weak academic performance.

In the ensuing thirty-five years, however, much has changed in American society and a great deal more research has been done on these matters. The newer studies have recently been summarized by Stanley Rothman and associates at Smith College's Center for the Study of Social and Political Change. They find that, while the self-esteem levels of blacks are now at least as high as those of whites, the average academic attainment among black students (though it has improved) remains below that of whites. The evidence, they conclude, "appears to show quite conclusively that the low-self-esteem hypothesis is neither a necessary nor sufficient explanation of black achievement levels."

The Michigan twelfth-grade survey data cited earlier have also been broken down by race, and here too little difference shows up between blacks and whites on questions that probe for self-esteem. In fact, black students reported slightly ***higher*** levels of agreement with statements about taking a positive attitude toward oneself, judging oneself to be a person "of worth," and being generally satisfied with oneself.

The only questions on which black and white seniors manifested modest differences in the other direction were concerned with what psychologists term "personal efficacy" or sense of control—i.e., the belief that one can actually accomplish what one sets out to do. Given, for example, the statement, "Every time I try to get ahead, something or somebody stops me," 36 percent of blacks agreed as against 25 percent of whites. Black students were also slightly more likely to think that "people who accept their condition in life are happier than those who try to change things," and that "planning only makes a person unhappy since plans hardly ever work out anyway." (It must be noted, however, that many more black students *rejected* these three propositions than identified with them.)

The distinction between "personal efficacy" and self-worth—i.e., believing oneself to be a good and valuable person—turns out to be important in research on self-esteem. For whites, the two usually vary together: an individual with an elevated sense of self-worth is likely also to display a robust sense of personal efficacy. And in the white population both qualities are in reasonably good shape. Among blacks, however, while feelings of self-worth are at least as sturdy as among whites, the sense of personal efficacy is somewhat weaker, and not only among high-school seniors. But this creates a huge dilemma for those who hope to boost minority self-esteem: personal efficacy has its roots in actual accomplishment, in prior experience, in the realities of where one is and what one has done. Its "significant predictors," say the psychologists Michael Hughes and David H. Demo in a 1989 study, are "education, personal income, quality of family and friendship relations, gender, and age." Roger Wilkins, now teaching history at George Mason University, notes that "for those born into or living in situations where

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there is no stability, or where the only successful people are criminals, self-esteem isn't going to do it for them."

Clearly, then, a school system wanting to heighten the sense of personal efficacy among minority children will have to teach them well enough to raise their actual achievement. Jaime Escalante (of *Stand and Deliver* fame) has figured this out, and succeeds brilliantly in teaching calculus to poor Hispanic youngsters in the barrio of East Los Angeles. So has the California high-school principal who cautioned a New York *Times* reporter that educators should not "just say 'they don't like themselves,' and that's it. Teach them how to read and write properly, and they'll feel better about themselves." Kenneth Clark also understood the central principle two decades ago. As recounted by Christopher Lasch:

> [I]t remained for [black] moderates like Kenneth Clark to make the genuinely radical point that "black children or any other group of children can't develop pride by just saying they have it, by singing a song about it, or by saying I'm black and beautiful or I'm white and superior." Racial pride, Clark insisted, comes from "demonstrable achievement."

IF DIVORCING the feedback a youngster gets in school from the actuality of his achievement is the first wrong move by contemporary esteem-enhancers, the second is taking a psychological construct which is mainly applicable to individuals and transforming it into a group property.

This is what the New York curriculum debate has been about. Recall the reasoning followed by creators of the "curriculum of inclusion": students need to be assured through their lessons that the ethnic group to which they belong has much to be proud of, because only if they think well of their group will they think well of themselves, and only if they think well of themselves will they succeed in their studies. It follows that the curriculum must be altered to end "exclusionary" tendencies which feed the "Eurocentric" arrogance of "majority" children while giving minority youngsters so little to learn about the contributions of their group that they feel depressed and inadequate.

In weighing the plausibility of this analysis, one must temporarily set aside the strange assumption that self-esteem is finite, something rationed by society through a "zero-sum" strategy that subtracts from one group whatever added esteem is conferred on another. One must forget, too, that the aspect of self-esteem which (some) minority students need more of is the type associated with bona-fide achievement, not the kind related to group pride. Consider only the paradoxical case of Asian-American youngsters. If curriculum-induced, group-linked esteem were truly a necessary precondition for educational achievement, these boys and girls would be the weakest students in America. After all, their "group"—actually representing dozens of different "cultures"—is the most thoroughly ignored in textbooks, state and local curriculum guides, and special observances and other attention-directing strategies on the part of schools. Yet by every relevant measure, Asian immigrants and their children have the highest average attainment levels of any minority; indeed, they register higher on some gauges than the "arrogant" majority.

That Commissioner Sobol's advisory panel did not even pause over this sizable lacuna in its reasoning surely indicates that the goals it seeks via curricular manipulation are far larger than minority self-esteem and school achievement. For what is really going on here is a guerrilla attack on the principle that Americans share any sort of "common culture," a continuing frontal assault against Western civilization in particular, the fanning of separatist flames within the population, and a lightly veiled quest for influence and fame by those who manage to present themselves as leaders or "experts" on behalf of the groups thus delineated. The zero-sum argument simply raises the temperature further by hinting to each group that what it needs more of must be taken from others who have too much.

We have already encountered such a hidden agenda at least once before. As Abigail Thernstrom* and others have shown, bilingual education was originally presented as a pedagogical strategy for helping immigrant youngsters to become fluent enough in English to enter successfully into the mainstream of American schools. In fairly short order, however, that goal was transformed into a campaign for heightened group consciousness, the purposeful maintenance of children's original languages and cultures, a much more leisurely approach to English fluency, and legitimation within educational policy and curricula of what Professor Diane Ravitch of Teachers College, Columbia, terms "particularistic multiculturalism." Proponents of this doctrine, says Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, are "not primarily interested in contributions that various groups have made to our history. They want to make sure minority students get told nice stories about themselves."

NOR should one assume that large racial and ethnic minorities are the only kinds that will qualify for such special treatment. The curriculum in Hawaiian schools places heavy emphasis on "native Hawaiian culture"; and representatives of native Hawaiian groups are pressing for similar handling in mainland classrooms. In addition, a recent article in the *Harvard*

* See her article, "Bilingual Miseducation," in the February issue of COMMENTARY.

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Educational Review urged the further revision of school curricula to "include the historical contributions of gay men and lesbians," and other efforts by public schools to build the self-esteem of young homosexuals. One can imagine future initiatives of this kind on behalf of many other demographic subsets.

In the colleges, such curricular additions are sometimes referred to as "victim studies," and at a growing number of post-secondary institutions one can take courses, or even a major, in women's studies, black studies, Chicano studies, and so forth. That this type of thinking about education has trickled down into the schools is hardly surprising. One way or another, every significant development in higher education eventually echoes in the elementary-secondary system. But there is an immense distinction among levels of education: individuals can decide for themselves which college (if any) to attend and, most of the time, what to study there. Schooling, by contrast, is compulsory up to a legally prescribed age, and unless one is able to afford private tuition one is obliged to study whatever curriculum the public-education system teaches. (In some states, private schools must also cover essentially the same content, if only so that their students can pass state tests.)

Accordingly, what the public schools define as their curriculum is what nearly all children will learn. It is the foundation of the knowledge, values, and ideas on which colleges and graduate schools later build. And it is the only formal education that some people ever receive, an education meant to equip them as citizens, parents, and members of a free society, as well as earners-of-a-living.

That, of course, is why the school curriculum has always been an object of political scrutiny, and why the social philosophy underlying the recent task-force critique in New York is at least as important as its psychological assumptions. The contention that building self-esteem is an urgent curricular and pedagogical priority becomes the ground both for including more about particular groups in the corpus of what is taught and for ensuring that the additional material is rendered in pleasant and encouraging ways, at least for members of those groups. It thereby unites psychology and philosophy in dubious alliance. And it invites serious deformations of historical reality.

Distortion enters when we exaggerate the contributions of any one group, either in absolute terms (ascribing to members of a group significant achievements that may not really have been theirs or may not have been very significant) or in relative terms (as when we downplay the accomplishments of others lest we cede too much credit to an "arrogant" or "overrepresented" group). The practical effect is to impose achievement quotas on history itself, quotas that change with the contemporary political results one seeks.

Fortunately, the truth retains some rugged allies in the education profession. Shanker, for example, insists that "We must strongly oppose any rewriting of history that tries to divide our past up like a pie among competing groups and any curriculum that is dependent on political pressure." Yet this is precisely what, under cover of increasing self-esteem, the new particularistic multiculturalists are trying to do, as the "curriculum of inclusion" report in New York all but explicitly admitted:

> African American, Asian American, Latin, Native American culture or any other culture has no inherent weakness. Our educational system, however, teaches children of these cultures that they are marginal, have contributed little of substance to the land of their birth, and are fortunate that European Americans are so noble as to grant them limited access to the conditions of the dominant culture. From this distortion of reality grows racism, arrogance, and self-doubt. . . . A truly multicultural curriculum represents a body of knowledge about the African, Asian, Latin American/Caribbean, Native American, and European experience and presents an alternative approach to the education system. To the extent that this alternative curriculum with its equitable treatment of all cultures eliminates omissions . . . and challenges ethnocentric traditions of all kinds—it improves educational endeavors. . . . [Hence] the Commissioner [should] direct appropriate staff to undertake without delay a revision of all curricula and curricular materials so as to ensure that they are compatible with goals of equity and excellence for all cultures within our society. . . .

Thus is the fabric of a truly pluralistic society frayed, as children learn to eye one another with envy and suspicion, encouraged by teachers and textbooks to separate themselves into self-absorbed mutually hostile demographic factions. For a preview of the future envisioned for the United States of America by designers of New York's grandly misnamed "curriculum of inclusion" and their counterparts elsewhere in the land, one can look at intergroup relations in Lebanon, Kashmir, the Transcaucasus, even Canada. Youngsters in such places may brim with the self-esteem that is associated with pride-in-group. We should, however, pause a very long time before wishing their sorry and often violent fate upon our own sons and daughters.

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No Jewish Split on Israel

Earl Raab

In the last half-dozen years alone, there have been about a dozen reputable studies of American Jewish opinion on Israel. The most recent of them include nationwide polls by such groups as the Yankelovich organization and the Los Angeles *Times*, both in 1988; a special survey conducted for the Israel/Diaspora Institute in 1989 by Steven M. Cohen of Queens College, the dean of Jewish pulse-takers (who has also done periodic surveys for the American Jewish Committee); and several regional polls.

The exact percentages these studies have come up with can be held suspect on the usual grounds. Different methods were used, and while the samples in each case were massive, dissimilar bodies of respondents were plumbed. Thus, some of the universes contained only connected Jews (i.e., those belonging to a Jewish institution or organization); some had an indiscriminate mix of connected and unconnected Jews; and some were made up of "leadership" (typically drawn from the boards of major Jewish organizations and agencies). Moreover, different world events were in the backdrop of the answers.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, and contrary to the widespread impression of a growing "split" within the American Jewish community over Israel, we find an amazing similarity of responses to identical questions asked over and over again.

The first alleged split refuted by these surveys is between "doves" and "hawks." Indeed, the results quickly confound the applicability of any dove-hawk dichotomy even between those who are mainly concerned with the "morality" of Israeli foreign policy and those more exclusively concerned with Israeli security. It is an inherently false dichotomy—but one that deserves some attention because it is so often invoked.

The truth is that most American Jews hold a complex—though not contradictory—attitude which combines "hawkish" and "dovish" elements. Thus, at least half of those Jews with opinions have been consistently willing to affirm that the Palestinians should have their own homeland, but *only* provided that it poses no threat to Israel. About nine out of ten American Jews invariably reject the draconian idea of expelling Arabs from the West Bank, and about half, since the *intifada* began, have worried that "continuing occupation will erode" Israel's moral character. On the other hand, while "regretting" any excesses, an overwhelming majority feel that Israel's overall police activities in the West Bank and Gaza have been appropriate to the need. "The need" is Israel's survival. And most American Jews see Israel's survival as a high moral imperative in itself.

As against this complex attitude shared by the great majority of American Jews, there are the simpler views of a few marginal groups like the Jewish Committee on the Middle East. This committee, allegedly endorsed by "thousands of American Jews, including professors of over 125 universities nationwide," says in its platform that Israel has increasingly deviated "from moral values that we hold dear. . . . We can no longer condone or be associated with such Israeli behavior, nor, do we believe, should our country." Yet all surveys show that such sentiments are unequivocally rejected by more than nine out of ten American Jews—most of whom would consider this fringe committee highly immoral in its fatal abandonment of Israel.

But if moral conviction is not a measure which can be sensibly used to divide the mainstream of American Jews into "doves" and "hawks," neither is it useful to draw the dove/hawk dichotomy between American Jews who are for and those who are against "exchanging some of the territories for credible peace."

Thus, only a small percentage of American Jews would want Israel to hold forever and for "historical reasons" onto all the territories seized in the Six-Day War of 1967. Only a small percentage would want Israel to refuse to negotiate with the PLO under any possible circumstances, or to reject the idea of some Palestinian entity under any and all conditions. Most American Jews would like the Israelis to "accommodate"—i.e., enter into negotiations over the territories and their governance. In the 1988 Los Angeles *Times* national poll of the general Jewish population, nine out of ten chose "accommodation" over unilateral withdrawal or annexation.

At the same time, most American Jews, including many of the "accommodators," are "hawkish" in the sense that they want very tough conditions attached to any Israeli compromise. They would want Israel to insist, for example, on the demilitarization of the exchanged territories, on a prenuptial agreement allowing the Israel Defense Forces to move in when and where necessary, and on the retention for security reasons of certain Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

The prevailing American Jewish belief that any agreements must be backed by tough conditions, even tough military conditions, probably turns on an overwhelming distrust of the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular, certainly of their leaders. For the majority of American Jews have often said that Israel can "never" trust the Arabs to make peace. The (small) sample of Jewish leaders

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polled in 1989 were more evenly divided on that particular formulation, but by an overwhelming ratio they too affirmed that "the PLO is determined to destroy Israel." The same group of leaders, however, also said, and again by an overwhelming ratio, that Israel should negotiate with the PLO *if* the PLO credibly recognizes Israel and renounces terrorism.

On both counts, the rank and file has responded to other recent surveys in about the same order: almost all believing that the Palestinians in particular and the Arabs in general are determined to destroy Israel; but most of them also believing that Israel should talk with the PLO, *if* the PLO reconstructs itself—i.e., ceases to be the PLO.

In other words, most American Jews think that no fruitful accommodation or peace is possible without some kind of Palestinian presence, but they also think that a genuine and reliable acceptance of Israel by the PLO or other hard-line Arabs is probably pie in the sky, and dangerous to credit.

THERE is another factor which deepens the hawkish element among American Jewish pragmatists. This is the fact that the overwhelming majority of American Jews believe that it is the Israelis who must make the final judgment on their own security. Most American Jews feel that it is proper for them to get directly involved in affecting Israeli policy on the "who-is-a-Jew" issue, but only a small minority believe that it is proper for them to get directly involved in affecting Israeli policy on security issues.

This does not mean that most American Jews think the Israeli government has always made the right strategic judgments for its own security and welfare. Although, to almost all American Jews and American Jewish leaders, the major impediments to Israeli/Palestinian peace have been placed there by the hard-line Arab states and the PLO, a substantial number also say that they "have often been troubled" by Israeli government policies; and a majority has said that the Israelis have to "change some of their attitudes" if peace is to be attained and Israeli security assured.

The Israeli attitudes which the American Jewish mainstream finds strategically mistaken are those which seem to be inflexibly ideological and permanently nonconciliatory. Most American Jews have assigned such attitudes to Likud. In general, American Jews have favored Labor over Likud, at least by a ratio of 3 to 1.

But this preference, among rank and file as well as leadership, cannot be charged to Israeli foreign policy alone, or perhaps even primarily to foreign policy. For the "liberal" bias of American Jews has pushed them toward the Labor coalition. And there is a general cultural factor as well. Many American Jews have felt that most Labor spokesmen were more "America-compatible" than most Likud spokesmen. When Menachem Begin took power, one survey found that American Jews were more negative about his "image" than were non-Jewish Americans. On the other hand, many American Jews have also been a little uneasy about some proposals from within the Labor camp which seemed not "tough" enough.

THE prevailing American Jewish criticism of some Israeli foreign policies has operated within the "halo effect" which also has characterized American public opinion in general. The Gallup organization once issued a special memo, after the 1982 incursion into Lebanon, marveling at the fact that Americans maintained their basic support of Israel, even while strongly criticizing some Israeli policies.

For different reasons of affinity, the American Jewish public seems to have maintained its basic political commitment to Israel, even when feeling critical of some Israeli policies. And if the fulcrum of favorable opinion for the American public is the conviction that Israel is an important ally, the fulcrum of favorable opinion for American Jews is Israeli security.

Of course, the "halo effect" will not necessarily last forever. Among the general American public, Israel's cause is still preferred to the Arab cause by margins of 3 or 4 to 1, and most Americans still consider Israel a good ally—but the ratios have been subject to more fluctuations and downward dips than in the salad days. This erosion might be aggravated by changed perceptions of American national interest as well as by new ideas about foreign aid.

The commitment of American Jews to Israel cannot be that easily eroded, but some subterranean shift could be taking place. One such shift has to do with the matter of publicly criticizing Israel. If the Jewish community can be said to be split at all, it is over this issue, on which the Jewish population has been almost evenly divided on a half-dozen occasions since 1982, with about half fearing that public criticism might endanger Israel's support in Congress, and about half fearing that silence might encourage the pursuit of what they regarded as bad policies.

Another source of possible erosion is generational. Here again, to be sure, there is no evidence of any significant difference among the age groups, young or old, with respect to Israeli foreign policy. But there is evidence that the younger Jewish cohort exhibits a somewhat weaker sense of emotional affinity to Israel than do its seniors. In the Los Angeles *Times* survey, about a quarter of those aged 18-40 and almost half of those 65 or older said they felt very close to Israel, with the 41-64 group falling about midway between them. Almost twice the proportion of the older group said that Israel was the chief item in their Jewish identity. Steven Cohen and others have also found some deterioration among the younger age group in feelings of affinity to Israel; this includes even "connected" Jews.

Yet again, however, this is not a problem stemming from foreign-policy differences with Israel: on the question of whether Israel's policies had become less acceptable to them, there was absolutely no difference between the 18-40 and the 41-64 age cohorts, and very little difference for the 65-and-over cohort. Nor was there any significant difference among any of those

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age groups on the matter of negotiating peace for land.

Fringe Jewish groups on the Left have attempted to profit by claiming that they, not the American Jewish leadership, are in tune with younger Jews and with the rank and file of American Jewry in general. At a *Tikkun* conference last fall, that magazine's editor said that, on the subject of Israel, "we are attempting to reclaim Judaism from the organized community." But the surveys demonstrate that there is no great gap between the attitudes of Jewish leadership and those of the rank and file. There is simply no consistent difference on questions of maintaining the level of American support, distrust of the PLO, and willingness to negotiate with a reconstructed PLO that has in effect repudiated the PLO of yesterday and today. For example, even though many Jews deplore the recent government-funded Israeli settlement in the Christian quarter of Jerusalem, most of them, out of their undiminished fear of Arab imperialism and Israeli vulnerability, would still strongly object to any actual economic sanctions by the U.S. in response to that action.

In short, despite debate in the American Jewish community over some Israeli strategies, any politician who thinks that a large number of Jewish voters would now look favorably upon cuts in aid to Israel, or other forms of diminished support, will soon discover that he has been misled by a false and tendentious reading of American Jewish opinion.

Feminist Pilgrims

Paul V. Mankowski

In one of the finest specimens of biblical narrative, we are told how David, fleeing from Saul, finds himself at the court of Achish, king of Gath, and how the servants of Achish blow David's cover by spreading the word of his military success:

> And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Do I lack madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? [1 Samuel 21:12ff.]

"Do I lack madmen?" We can picture poor Achish with perfect vividness: an up-country Palestinian chief trying his best to keep the clan together by giving jobs to his in-laws and jailing his rivals—what most men in comparable circumstances have done in every age. We see him, perhaps, rubbing his temples with his fingertips while dealing with the day's roster of petty crises bungled by his deadweight subordinates. A drooling and gibbering David is the last thing he wants in his IN tray. With his shaft of wry exasperation King Achish would win the instant sympathy of any administrator—indeed, of anybody with any responsibilities—who has ever had one problem too many walk through his door. Across a chasm of three millennia our hearts go out to him.

Perhaps, then, it is not too harsh a transition to refocus on another minor-league commandant in another region off the main trade routes, former President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua. Ronald Reagan once called him "a dictator in designer glasses," but I prefer to see him as an example of something humbler and more likable: a modest and serious man doing what he could to keep afloat the family business, which in this case was the business of riding herd on a Marxist revolution. Not so much a creator of contemporary politics as their product, he hitched his wagon to the Red Star while it was in the ascendant, only to find himself in charge of a country which, like Neutralia in Evelyn Waugh's novel *Scott King's Modern Europe*, was "a typical modern state, governed by a single party, acclaiming a dominant Marshal, supporting a vast ill-paid bureaucracy whose work is humanized and tempered by corruption." And then came the elections of March 1990. . . .

Now that the FSLN has huffed off with an ill grace to squat and pout in the Museum of World Leninism, we can look back with a kind of detachment at the curious fascination which it held for so many earnest Northerners in the past decade. A wide array of enthusiasts, hungry for evidence with which to vindicate their own schemes for a classless state, have wanted to view Nicaragua as the nation on the cutting edge of history, the crucible of politics, the laboratory in which the latest experiments in social engineering were the business not simply of the academy but of a real government

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with a real police force. Just as in the 30's most leftist intellectuals looked to the Soviet Union for a preview of the future shape of education or public health, so—half a century later—it was the Sandinistas who were seen to be building the New Jerusalem. Accordingly, it was to Managua and Estelí that the pilgrims trekked, clutching their Nikons and their dissertations, anxious for a cure or an imprimatur. A number of ingenious arguments have been advanced to address the painful question, How could so many have been so wrong? A look at the grasp of reality enjoyed by the votaries themselves will make the answer only too obvious.

It is hardly surprising, for example, that Western feminists should have mounted their own fact-finding tours to assess the progress of the Daughters of the Revolution. In May 1988 Maxine Molyneux published an article in the *Feminist Review*, "The Politics of Abortion in Nicaragua: Revolutionary Pragmatism—or Feminism in the Realm of Necessity?" Molyneux was grieved to learn that "Nicaragua is an anomaly among socialist states. Its comparatively advanced record on general political issues—pluralism, democracy, abolition of the death penalty—contrasts with a surprisingly conservative position on reproductive rights."

The chief villain was, of course, the Catholic Church, and particularly its hierarchy, which exercised a kind of mind control even over emancipated Sandinistas which Molyneux was at a loss to account for. But a second factor was the rather embarrassing one that the National Directorate of Nicaragua—though a splendid thing in itself—was overwhelmingly composed of *Latino* males, with predictable consequences: "The cults of *machismo* and *hombria* [manliness] place considerable store on being able to father large numbers of children, biologically if not socially."

It is interesting that leftists constitutionally averse to negative stereotypes of "ethnic minorities" find their scruples only too vincible when the ethnics in question fail to measure up. Nor is it only Nicaraguan men who are at fault. As Molyneux laments, "in Catholic countries where women's identification with motherhood is positive and particularly strong," even the sisters themselves can fall short of full enlightenment. One Nicaraguan feminist told the author:

> The losses of war have strengthened rather than diminished the emotional significance of motherhood. There are 11,000 women in Managua alone who are mothers of soldiers who have died in the fighting. Abortion in such a context is associated with more death; for some women it's unthinkable.

Our researcher does not explicitly draw the conclusion, but we are meant to feel that not the least of the tragedies of war is that it robs a young woman of her normal, wholesome urge for the surgical termination of pregnancy.

Yet true blame for Sandinista recalcitrance in the cause of reproductive rights may have reached even higher. Molyneux does not flinch from the suggestion that, at least in part, the President himself was responsible. She has come upon damaging excerpts from a 1987 speech:

> "One way of depleting our youth is to promote the sterilization of women in Nicaragua . . . or to promote a policy of abortion"; "The problem is that the woman is the one who reproduces. The man can't play that role." [Ortega] said that some women, "aspiring to be liberated," decide not to bear children. Such a woman, "negates her own continuity, the continuity of the human species."

The author is prepared to be somewhat lenient toward the heterodoxy of such opinions. She explains, "Ortega is a man who lives the war every day, and his off-the-cuff remarks reflect a pragmatic, political attitude toward what he sees." At the same time, though,

> some have seen a suggestion of moralism in his formulations in the implication that women have been bystanders in the revolutionary process and must now therefore discharge their debt to the nation by having babies. . . . What annoyed many women was the fact that Ortega saw fit to use the authority and discourse of the revolution and the war against the *contras* to attack and demobilize the campaigners and supporters of women's reproductive choice.

We are, in short, left with the clear impression by Molyneux that, while her idol may wear designer glasses, he has trotters of clay.

There was worse yet in store for Daniel Ortega. *Revolutionary Forgiveness: Feminist Reflections on Nicaragua** is the travel diary of the Amanecida Collective, a group of thirteen persons of advanced ideas from the Harvard Divinity School and the Episcopal Divinity School of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The book is principally the account of a one-month visit to Nicaragua made by eleven members of the collective. Even by the standards of the Managua photo-op, they were an imposing group:

> [D]iversity looms large in our spiritualities, as we represent different ecclesial backgrounds and foregrounds. Carol is Moravian. Flo is a Unitarian Universalist minister. Margarita and Kirsten belong to the United Church of Christ, and Susan is a United Church of Christ minister. Six of us are Episcopalians: Laura, Anne, Carter, Virginia, Laurie, and Jane; Carter and Jane are Episcopal priests. Pat is a musician in an Episcopal Church. Like several of us, Elaine is a former Roman Catholic. She is now post-christian and also is wrestling with the possibility of joining the Episcopal Church.

Even a Sandinista steeled to the ravages of Claymore mines and fragmentation bombs must have swallowed once or twice at the prospect of hosting the Amanecida Collective for a few weeks. Like missionaries clutching their Bibles in a white-knuckle grip, these troopers came with a robust faith: conventional militant feminism, but with a notably Sapphic twist:

> Our commitment to the liberation of lesbians and gay men requires that we confront those

* Orbis Books (1987).

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people and those policies which proclaim sexual relationships between men and women, heterosexual marriage, and nuclear family constellations as normative for the health of society . . . the problems of heterosexism and homophobia cannot be separated from those of gender, racial, and class oppression. To try to do so is to underestimate the systemic nature of the forces of oppression in the world and to miss altogether the key questions in any adequate analysis of injustice: who controls whom? . . . Our christian/postchristian faith becomes increasingly an advocacy posture for the self-determination of all people who have been objectified and damaged by the imperialistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, classist, and anti-Semitic deeds done "in the name of Christ."

Clear, I hope? Less zealous reformers than the Amanecidanas might have noticed that the personal and social enthusiasms expressed in their manifesto did not dovetail especially well with the urgencies of the Sandinista revolution; yet they were not to be put off. The purpose of their trip was not so much to learn as to teach—or, when they would learn, it was only to confirm by example what they had already grasped by Faith (I mean, by their advocacy posture).

Thus, the official justification they were offered for the continued detention of political prisoners did not seem to trouble any of the visitors, yet it was noted by them with approval that in Nicaragua, "advertising that exploits women's bodies is now illegal." Certainly they were not about to let conventional barriers to understanding frustrate their plans to inspire and be inspired. One Nicaraguan woman at a rally for Ortega, noticing that the *gringas* had a tape recorder, asked if she could recite a poem. Our informant readily assented, and tells us, "I could not understand the words but listened to the tone of her voice, which rose and fell in a passionate lament." Even ignorance of the language is chalked up not to personal unpreparedness but to the wholesale blindness of European civilization:

> We regretted that so few of us knew enough Spanish during our visits to be able to converse easily with Nicaraguans. Having a translator inhibited spontaneous communication. It also served as an uneasy reminder . . . of the distance between North and South and of the cultural myopia in which most U.S. citizens of Northern European descent have been raised.

However, it all comes right in the end:

> Non-verbal sounds in the night, as well as what we saw, tasted, touched, and smelled, were as important to our meeting Nicaragua and its people as any words we were able to understand.

No 19th-century sahib, no blasé son of the manse, no Church Mission Society zealot was ever so confident as the Amanecida Collective that you can get the Wog to tell you everything you need to know if you handle him properly. The absence of Spanish *is* regretted, but we come to suspect that this is largely because the good sisters had sermons of their own they were anxious to give. U.S. cultural myopia did not, it seems, impair their vision of the horrors of lingering sexism. The predictable enemies are scored, including Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo and especially the Pope, "whose contempt for both women and the Sandinista regime" was seen as strikingly pernicious. But the "deeply-rooted *machismo*" is also deplored and it is noticed with pique that there was "a nine-*man* ruling junta."

Inevitably, the focus comes around to the sad fact of Nicaraguan homophobia. What seems most to have unsettled the ladies of the divinity schools of Cambridge is that no one much cared about the problem. They asked insistently about gay rights, but were shrugged off. People gave unhelpful answers like, "The revolution is more important than these things." "Homosexuality doesn't exist in Nicaragua." "There are more important things to worry about." Like the True Believers they are, the Amanecidanas were able at least to find a reassuring explanation: "Confusion over these issues results in a linking of homosexuality with prostitution and coercion, because that was a common male homosexual experience under Somoza's National Guard."

The Faith was rattled, then, but still intact. One member of the collective burst into a long and agonized *cri du coeur*, of which I give not the twentieth part:

> I am what I am and I am a North American. . . . I am what I am *una lesbiana norte-americana*. . . . How do I embrace this brokenness? Is it madness that I feel? Is it passion, the passion of thousands like me who know no other life? How do I convince Fidel? or Daniel? or Tomás? or Ernesto? Why won't they see our struggles as connected? I am not the enemy. The white man is our enemy. . . . We must find a different God. A God beyond Father, beyond the jealous patriarchal role model we have been subjected to. . . . The white man will never give us power, we must find our own. We must take our power. . . .

A STERN moralist might argue that the Amanecida Collective was Daniel Ortega's just comeuppance for having succumbed in the first place to the temptations of the Left. Politics makes strange bedfellows (to use a spectacularly inappropriate cliché), and the enthusiasms of feminists are after all no more than the stock principles of Marxism extended beyond the bounds of sanity.

All this is admitted. But let's be fair. Here we had a man operating well within the tradition of the backwoods thane, keeping his brothers employed and his enemies in prison by a combination of wit, bluster, and *very* dangerous liaisons. Like that of Achish, king of Gath, his average day must have been a nightmare: intrigues, pronunciamentos, jailbreaks, agricultural disasters following upon each other thick as fleas. Think of what a free half-hour in the afternoon must have meant to the man. Think of the relief, the chance for a cigar enjoyed in solitude. And consider then the effect when his door was thrown open, the Amanecida Collective shuffled in for an audience . . . and he *had* to think of something nice to say. If we can, after lo! these many years, commiserate with Achish, can we not spare a twinge of sympathy for Daniel?

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The Adventures of Mordecai Richler

Carol Iannone

When Irving Howe wrote in *World of Our Fathers* that the immigrant Jewish experience in the New World had encompassed its share of outlaws, rebels, criminals, prostitutes, and reprobates, he was not saying anything most Jewish writers needed to be told. Figures as diverse as Michael Gold, Daniel Fuchs, Meyer Levin, Budd Schulberg, Saul Bellow, and Norman Mailer had long shown a sometimes inordinate literary interest in the shadier areas of Jewish experience, and in challenging or offsetting any stereotype of the "good Jewish boy" unable to function on the mean streets of American life or in the he-man world of much American fiction.

What goes for these writers goes doubly for the novelist Mordecai Richler, not only a Jew but a Canadian, and suffering, as he sees it, from a kind of double remove from the wellsprings of heroism and power. Canada's crisis of identity vis-à-vis the United States has been likened by the Anglo-Canadian writer Robertson Davies to the plight of the spinster who stays home to care for her aging parents, only to see them become thanklessly engrossed in the glamorous daughter who eloped years before. Richler himself has invoked a comparison between the free-spirited, free-roaming Huckleberry Finn (the U.S.) and the more cautious and serious town-bred Tom Sawyer (Canada). And if this comparison holds true for Canadians in general, how much more so for Canadian Jews: one such Jew, Richler has troubled to point out, tellingly, created the fable of Clark Kent and Superman.

Richler's first notable novel, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1959), considered with justification a minor classic in the coming-of-age genre, directly and energetically engages the two "halves" of (Canadian) Jewish experience, so to speak, and in the process becomes a universal tale of struggle between the nobler and baser aspirations of Everyman. Duddy Kravitz and his older brother Lennie live in the cold-water-poor Jewish section of Montreal with their widowered father, Max, a cabdriver and part-time pimp for a shabby prostitute. Lennie, a medical student at McGill, is a model Jewish son, the favorite of his father and of his Uncle Benjy, a prosperous factory owner. Duddy, by contrast, is a skinny, nervous, frenetically charged kid determined to be "a somebody" regardless of who or what that "somebody" might be.

In high school Duddy heads a gang of "Wanderers" who make life miserable for their enervated Wasp teachers and for little home-based mama's boys. Starting with make-money schemes involving comic books and stamp collections, graduating to a hilarious stint as a producer of arty bar-mitzvah films, Duddy grows into a regular Sammy Glick, "a little Jewboy on the make" who will stop at nothing in order to own a piece of land—a dream planted in him by his affectionate grandfather Simcha who instructs that "a man without land is nobody." After often unsavory efforts and prodigious setbacks, Duddy does manage the purchase of some exquisite prime property around a lake, but he obtains it at the price of rejection by his beloved *zeyda*, who cannot abide what he hears of Duddy's methods.

Through his portrait of this extended masculine tribe, Richler succeeds in conveying the warmth, tenderness, loyalty, pride, and simple cohesiveness as well as the simmering hostilities, tensions, disappointments, and grievances that can make up the complex emotional life of an immigrant family. Although Duddy is often the object of censure in the novel, a "scheming little bastard" who reminds others of what they dislike in themselves, it is also he who rescues family members in trouble, including the sterling Lennie. Even more, the reader is made to witness the hurts and humiliations he endures in his achingly painful search for identity and recognition. We feel his worried thinness, his nervousness, the nightmares from which he awakens screaming. We watch him sweat, push, pant, shake, and run, run, run. And we experience, too, the conflicted messages of his environment, touting success along with some dried-up dream of socialism, an environment peopled by both the noble Simcha and the much-admired Jerry Dingleman, nicknamed the Boy Wonder, a corrupt underworld czar.

The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz manages to be a thoroughly modern novel partly because it retains certain conventional aspects of form. Particularly, the moral mooring provided by Simcha and to some extent Uncle Benjy ("There's a brute inside you, Duddel," he writes in his farewell letter to his nephew, "and this being such a hard world, it would be the easiest thing for you to let it overpower you. Don't Duddel. Be a gentleman. A *mensch.*"), permits Richler to maintain an exhilarating ambivalence about his hero to the very end, neither condemning, excusing, nor endorsing him, but keeping the stakes high enough to make it all matter.

Richler's next stand-out novels,

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St. Urbain's Horseman (1971) and *Joshua Then and Now* (1980), are often cited together because they are so similar in structure and content. With them, a self-consciously literary modernism takes over that reflects Richler's lessening ability to make sense of the experiences he nevertheless seems compelled to write about again and again. In these works the distance between Richler and his main characters narrows; the novels are told in an artsy episodic fragmented fashion full of flashbacks and digressions and without a clear point of view, techniques that can disguise only for a time their author's lack of any felt direction.

Each of these novels tells of a middle-aged Jew who has advanced beyond the limits of the Montreal ghetto to a happy marriage and family with a beautiful Gentile woman and to a lucrative if aesthetically less than satisfying career in the film-television-journalism worlds. Richler continues to favor seedy, against-type Jewish characters—Joshua Shapiro's father in *Joshua Then and Now* is an ex-boxer and bank robber, his mother an aspiring burlesque queen who performs for a gang of teenaged boys at her son's bar mitzvah—but such elements have already begun to lose the significance they had in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* and to appear simply gratuitous. To some extent their place is taken by Joshua of *Joshua Then and Now* and by Jake Hersh of *St. Urbain's Horseman*, prime examples of the type Peter Shaw has named the "tough-guy intellectual"; both characters do their share of drinking, fighting, and womanizing, conducting the bohemian life around Europe, winning their *shiksas* through sheer energy and a vivid maleness that makes their hapless Anglo-Saxon rivals pale into the woodwork. (That a Gentile wife should be proof of Jewish superiority is a contradiction that seems never to occur to Richler.)

The plot of each novel involves improbable sex scandals and trumped-up family discords, but basically what we have are two aging Montreal boys agonizing over the ghetto they have left behind and various weighty aspects of the Jewish heritage even as they make their way successfully into the trendy, dominant culture they alternately covet and despise. In some ways, too, the novels can be seen as meandering explorations of messianism—the messiah in certain configurations being perhaps the ultimate tough guy.

Thus, in *St. Urbain's Horseman*, Jake's older cousin Joey Hersh, the eponymous Horseman, a shadowy figure who haunts the book and the imagination of the main character, is a kind of glamorous rogue, a dabbler in sports, acting, and women who eventually leads a gang that kills a French-Canadian during an outbreak of anti-Semitism. Joey flees Montreal and thereafter assumes for some, including Jake, legendary stature as a Jewish avenger—in one persistent scenario he is a relentless pursuer of the infamous Dr. Mengele of Auschwitz. But although Jake is furious at the "good Jews" who will go to any lengths to accommodate themselves to the larger culture, he also learns in the course of the novel that Joey is probably an irresponsible, selfish, and disreputable individual really unworthy of adulation. At the close of the book, and with some reluctance, Jake is more or less forced to set aside his heroic longings in favor of the everyday joys and sorrows of his increasingly assimilated life.

In *Joshua Then and Now*, the main character tries his hand at being a messiah himself, by means of a fantasied Nazi and a couple of imaginary Jewish victims on the island of Ibiza (to which Joshua has made pilgrimage in homage to Hemingway). This novel, too, ends with an unconvincing and unfelt affirmation, more or less, of prosperous normalcy as a perhaps unavoidable mode of Jewish existence in the modern world.

ACTUALLY, what the two novels convey more vividly than any of this is the intensity of the contradictions besetting their author whenever he confronts the problem of Jewishness in a post-traditional world. In his new work, *Solomon Gursky Was Here*,* his first since *Joshua Then and Now*, Richler has collapsed completely under the weight of these contradictions. Here the uglier aspects of Jewish experience have swollen from "half" to nearly the whole picture. Richler's gallery of Jewish grotesques includes fat, big-mouthed *yentas*; sniveling, butt-kissing *schlemiels*; acne-encrusted, *yarmulke*-topped teenagers; scheming, spiteful *machers*. Correlatively, his form has declined even further from a poorly handled modernism into the mire of postmodernism. The new novel has prompted critics to suggest comparisons with Thomas Pynchon and even with the Latin American magic realists, as if in writing about Jews Richler were dealing with the bizarre vestiges of Aztec or Inca civilization instead of the familiar offspring of our familiar desert partriarchs.

To begin in the beginning, Richler presents us in *Solomon Gursky* with an alternative, deconstructed version of biblical history. Ephraim Gursky, grandfather of Solomon, is a repellent, dishonest, unscrupulous English-born Jew, one-time thief and pimp, who in 1845 joins a doomed Arctic expedition. The only survivor, he goes on to found a bastardized, millenarian form of Judaism among the Eskimos which entitles him, for example, to sexual favors from the females. With the Jewish woman he married back in Europe, Ephraim begets his one legitimate child, the insipid Aaron (he also produces 27 illegitimate ones), and Aaron in turn begets three sons, Bernard, Solomon, and Morrie.

The three boys grow up on the wild and rigorous frontier of the Northwest Territories in the early years of the 20th century and eventually take up a profitable business in bootlegging. (A lot of this heroic, pioneering Jewishness on the fringes of the law is reminiscent of Willy Loman's brother Ben in *Death of a Salesman*.) When Prohibition is lifted, the business expands into a fabulous liquor empire, partly thanks to the ruthless expertise of the despicable, nasty, greedy Bernard. As for Morrie, although he seems for a time to be

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an actual human being, he is also portrayed as a disappointed, nose-picking, hand-rubbing nebbish, and then in his own quiet way he turns out to be an even bigger bastard than his brother. (The fourth- and fifth-generation Gurskys are also almost uniformly corrupt, worthless, or deluded, and moving into the sections of the novel featuring them is like going from a demented *Bonanza* to a deranged *Dynasty* or *Dallas*.)

SOLOMON is this novel's resident messiah figure, "Ephraim's anointed one," kidnapped for a time in his childhood by the old man and made to learn the rigors of the Arctic. He is, in the words of Diana McClure, the Gentile woman who loves him, the "most defiantly Jewish man I have ever known." Solomon mysteriously disappears on a flight over the Arctic—a note is eventually found reading, in the (unattributed) words of Rabbi Hillel's famous dictum, "If not me, who? If not now, when?"—and then just as mysteriously reappears at certain crucial historical events over the ensuing decades, although in what capacity and to what effect is unclear.

In the novel, the story of the Gursky family becomes the obsession of Moses Berger, a broken-down alcoholic writer who serves as a kind of Nick Carraway to Solomon's Gatsby, although the clarity, coherence, and serenity of Fitzgerald's first-person narrative are quite beyond Richler, who has only the most attenuated aesthetic control over the mess of his material. Part of the novel's texture, such as it is, lies in Moses's gradual uncovering of the Gursky story from remote sources—including, apparently, cryptic messages from Solomon himself—complete with postmodernist suggestions of differing versions and questions about veracity, etc. Although Moses Berger is a failure, in Richler's universe he is almost admirable, better than sellouts like his father before him or like his friend Sam Birenbaum, a.k.a. Sam Burns, a TV anchorman, "a little trendy horseshit TV mavin, the trustworthy face that comes between the Preparation-H and Light Days commercials," good boys who played by the rules and lost their souls. (That Richler's opinion of ineffectually pious or traditionally "good" individuals embraces Jews and Gentiles alike is shown by the fate of Solomon's son Henry, a saintly but weak Orthodox Jew who ends up being eaten, literally, by his hateful son Isaac on a failed Arctic expedition, and by the contemptuous treatment of the puritanical Bertram Smith, who will not be bought off by the bootlegging Gurskys.)

THE novel is an unpleasant chore to read for a lot of reasons. Richler ranges, rudderless, from farce to fabulism to mythology to satire to romanticism to realism to naturalism to whatever. It is often difficult to know what is going on; characters come and go, many of them making little lasting impression, events are described with indulgence and without significance, many elements float without direction or resolution, the plot is needlessly fragmented and convoluted and grows more and more outlandish and unbelievable as it progresses, with arty symbols and recurrent motifs—ravens, portraits—that in the end become laughable. It is also obscene and vulgar beyond any purpose but simple titillation. Arctic expeditions and frontier life become occasions for Richler to describe in minute and obsessive detail every possible angle of human depravity and dissolution. And he does his best on "civilization" too, depicting, for example, a Passover at which blood-filled matzah is served.

Of course, the modernist enterprise has meant, among other things, the recovery or exposure of the lost and primitive roots of a dried-out civilization, but with Richler we are not so much reminded of the savagery ever present in the human soul as returned to it. Critics have hopefully suggested that Richler is writing out of a Swift-like moral rage, but he seems too spiritually exhausted to do much more than wallow in the filth. Everything, at any rate, plunges toward the lowest common denominator: "Dig deep enough into the past of any noble family," rants Solomon at one point, "and there is a Bernard at the root. The founder with the dirty fingernails. The killer. No better, possibly a lot worse, than my brother."

That leaves Solomon the redeemer, the romantically charismatic tough guy, war hero, flying ace, gambler, womanizer, gangster, rogue, a brilliant "roaring, thundering Jew" who inspires fear, envy, and admiration. Clearly he enjoys Richler's admiration as well. But as a character he is simply unreal, a device that allows Richler to posit a robust alternative to the barbarities and enervations of civilization without having to substantiate it. Even Solomon's failed love affair with Diana McClure, clearly meant to be a centerpiece of the book, is flat and unconvincing.

In a last missive to Moses Berger, Solomon has this to say: "Look at it this way. The system was inspired, but it is man that is vile. It won't work. The Sermon on the Mount. The Manifesto. The world continues to pay a punishing toll for our Jewish dreamers." This is as close as we come to what the novel is about—all the messiahs have failed. Even Israel, we discover at the book's close, "the country that was to be a beacon unto the nations," has proved a great disappointment. But in reality it is Mordecai Richler who is up the creek without a paddle, mesmerized by the vileness he sees, lost in the inferno, traveling a very long way just to avoid being a good Jewish boy.

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The Continuing Struggle

MY ENEMY, MY SELF. By YORAM BINUR. *Doubleday. 215 pp. $18.95.*

CHILDREN OF BETHANY: THE STORY OF A PALESTINIAN FAMILY. By SAID K. ABURISH. *Indiana University Press. 256 pp. $18.95.*

PALESTINE AND ISRAEL: THE UPRISING AND BEYOND. By DAVID MCDOWALL. *University of California Press. 331 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD NORDEN

For a while this past winter it must have seemed that all over the world, liberation, self-determination, and reconciliation were the order of the day, and that only in China and Israel were the old men continuing to hang on, fearfully and violently resisting the wave of the future. To be sure, Israel, unlike China, has the democratic and parliamentary machinery to change course without bloody upheaval, and the country has been undergoing one of its periodic political shuffles. But whatever the outcome of that exercise, an impatient world is liable to discover that not too much has changed.

To understand in advance why not, it is useful to look at these three books on the Arab-Israeli dispute, not the first and certainly not the last on the subject.

My Enemy, My Self by Yoram Binur is unusual, maybe unique. There have been, during the long history of the fight between Arabs and Jews over the sliver of real estate between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, many accounts by Jewish romantics and spies of how they manged to enter enemy territory and pass themselves off as Arabs. The romantics were poets and anthropologists, and more than once they ended by doing some spy work, too. They were the Zionist equivalent of Lawrence of Arabia or Kit Carson.

What Binur did was different. He is a radical left-winger, and wishing, like other leftist Israeli writers such as David Grossman and Uri Avnery, to humanize the Palestinians in the eyes of his fellow Israelis so that they would reconsider their objections to parleying with the PLO, he disguised himself as a Palestinian laborer and spent time in both Tel Aviv and the refugee camps of Gaza. The result is an Israeli version of John Howard Griffin's famous *Black Like Me.*

Not surprisingly, Binur found that his countrymen exploit, humiliate, and continually harass and intimidate the human beings who clean up after them, and that these helots reciprocate by committing little acts of sabotage, sleeping with Jewish women and dreaming of a day when accounts can really be settled. Of the dozens of Israelis who appear in this quite readable book, only a handful are not portrayed as swine. The stupidity and brutality of the majority are attributed, however, not to anything inherent in Jews or Zionism, but to the effects of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The solution is to hand these areas over to the PLO.

Generally Binur comes across as a realist, not a sentimentalist or ideologue. Most of his story is told with that air of rough straightforwardness which persists as one of the most familiar and least endearing of Israeli virtues. But as to the effect he hopes to have, he is either confused or disingenuous.

At one point, he explains that he undertook his project to inform ignorant Israelis of the mundane, human, shocking facts, so that when the time comes, his countrymen can decide knowledgeably on the fate of the occupation. Elsewhere, however, he writes: "I have heard Palestinians say more than once, 'Israelis don't have any idea what's going on here. If they did, things would look different'—a naive sentiment, in my humble opinion." Indeed, although Binur enjoyed some celebrity when his adventure was publicized, his book did not shock or turn around Israeli opinion. Most people, to the author's disappointment, were only interested in how he had managed to pass as an Arab.

Their reaction is understandable, since Israelis know more about the Palestinians, and about themselves, than Binur gives them credit for. It is not necessary to impersonate a Palestinian dishwasher in Tel Aviv to figure out that his Jewish boss may be taking advantage of him, and that this, among many other things, enrages the Arab, who in practice hasn't got much legal recourse. But most Israelis know that there is more to the occupation than that, and much more to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

For example, most Palestinians do not cross into Israel proper to work, and not all who do go are unprotected—many get union wages and have had fairly decent relations with their bosses, even during the *intifada.* More important, even if the occupation were merely corrupting and enraging, the guilt and shame which Binur and writers like him mean to arouse by holding a mirror up to it would be suppressed by most of his countrymen, and rightly so, the fundamental issue being not one of human rights but of geopolitics.

The closest Binur comes to dealing with this issue is in his report of an exchange he had in his Palestinian persona with a typically "rude and tactless" Israeli:

> "And where exactly [inquired the Israeli] do you want to establish this state of yours?"
>
> "In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A lot of us believe that one day we'll be able to establish one secular democratic state that will include all of what you call Israel and we call Palestine. . . ."
>
> "And after you get your state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, you'll try to take over all of Israel. That's what you really want, isn't it?"
>
> "I don't deny that there are many who would like to have it that way, to return to their homes in Haifa and Jaffa, for instance.

EDWARD NORDEN *is an ex-American Israeli. His article on visiting New York appeared in last month's issue.*

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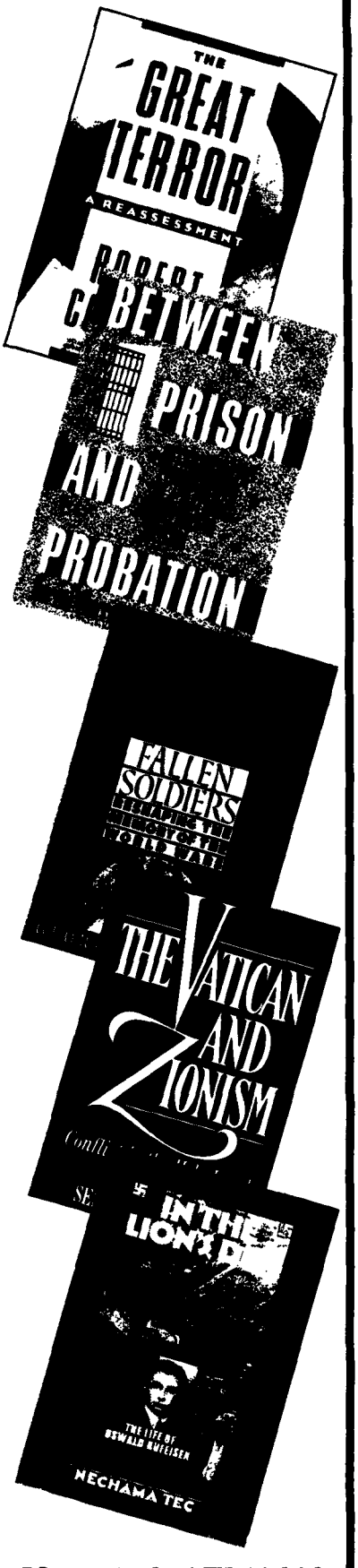

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I'd also like it. But for most of us it's already clear that this isn't possible."

His fellow Israeli, Binur says, "listened with great interest," but was not convinced. "The Palestinian state could turn out to be a disaster for us and then we'll have to go to war again." These worried objections Binur dismisses as "a string of clichés."

Children of Bethany is another book in which Palestinians are presented together with their names and their feelings, and this time by a real Palestinian (now making his home in New York). Said Aburish at least has the sense not to make light of Israeli fears. Indeed, while emotionally sympathetic to the PLO, he introduces not one Jew into his narrative and never gets into geopolitics at all.

Bethany is a village near Jerusalem. Aburish's book is a history of the place since 1917 as embodied in the lore and careers of his family, locally the leading one. This book is truthful enough not to cast Zionism as the snake in the Palestinian garden. "The Bethany of 1917," Aburish writes, "was . . . a cluster of hovels." If within a generation things in many respects were much better, this was thanks to that same British presence whose mandate was to turn Palestine into the Jewish national home.

Zionism, in other words, has been not only a curse but also a blessing of sorts for the people it intruded on. This is a secret which few Palestinians will confess to, and it can only be inferred from Aburish's chronicle. What is plain from his book is that the complex impact of Zionism on Palestinians was felt long before the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, and that one result of it is the class of Palestinian entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and revolutionaries, men and women dispersed all over the world, who have nothing in common with Binur's sweaty laborers except a proudly aggrieved sense of their national identity.

An advertising man and an American citizen who is proud to have his daughter chosen assistant to the curator of art at the White House, Aburish is simultaneously "acculturated" in exile and distressed by his people's suffering. He may be more than a little guilty to be living in the U.S. instead of sharing the rigors of Israeli occupation. For the future, at any rate, he offers no plans, only the hope that it will not be "as bleak as the past."

OUR third book, *Palestine and Israel: The Uprising and Beyond*, is set in more of a geopolitical context. It recognizes that the history of the struggle over Israel/Palestine did not start yesterday, but all the way back in the 1880's. David McDowall also offers a solution, after having retold that long history as he sees it, and after having stated his bias: "My own position is more sympathetic to the Palestinian view than to the Zionist one."

An Irishman, McDowall seems to have learned understatement at Oxford—actually, he pretty clearly believes that Zionism is a repellent, racist ideology which must breed deplorable, self-destructive practices. Israel, the geopolitical expression of this ideology, is a state with which no peaceful coexistence is possible. The boundaries of the Jewish state are not important for McDowall. Wherever they may be, Zionism for him is neither redeemable nor viable. Nor is the Palestinian problem (which Zionism created) soluble without Israel's dissolution. This is due to impersonal, objective circumstances and forces.

The demographic trend, McDowall reports, is running against the Jews, not only in the occupied territories but in Israel proper. Furthermore, the Palestinian refugees scattered in Lebanon, Syria, etc. could not be accommodated in the tiny West Bank and Gaza. Many would have to be returned to their former homes in Israel, and there "empowered" as citizens. In short, in order to solve its problems and those of the Palestinians, Israel would have to de-Zionize, give up its Jewish character, commit suicide.

Now, McDowall's analysis and its implications may sound outmoded, especially following Yasir Arafat's speeches in Stockholm and Geneva in December 1988. But they are fully in keeping with the PLO's Covenant and the UN's "Zionism-is-Racism" resolution of 1975, neither of which has been amended. In fact, McDowall seems to be on the same wavelength as Arafat's deputy, Abu Iyad, who reassures Arab audiences that after the occupation ends, the liberation of the rest of Palestine will be next on the agenda. This is the scenario of "stages" which Israeli hawks warn about and which some Israeli doves do not dismiss out of hand.

As for the demographic projections McDowall relies on, they did look discouraging for the Jews when he did his research a couple of years ago. But prophecy is an art, not a science, and he has fallen victim to his bias, not to say his wishful thinking: "There is unlikely to be any significantly increased Jewish immigration in the future, certainly not on a scale to affect the demographic balance in the Jewish favor." But a great movement of Soviet Jews to Israel has since begun, alarming Arafat and—who knows?—maybe concentrating his mind.

The arrival of these reinforcements has been a boost to Israeli morale. Yet numbers aside, the suspicion lingers that the PLO says one thing and plans something else—something like what McDowall and Abu Iyad have in mind. Reasonable or paranoid, this widespread suspicion is a fact of life. Unless it can be allayed, the struggle and the suffering will continue.

As Time Goes By

RIGHT PLACES, RIGHT TIMES: FORTY YEARS IN JOURNALISM NOT COUNTING MY PAPER ROUTE. By HEDLEY DONOVAN. *Holt. 463 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by SAM TANENHAUS

IN THE opening sentence of his memoir, Hedley Donovan, editor-in-chief of Time Inc. from 1964

SAM TANENHAUS, *a new contributor, is writing a biography of Whittaker Chambers for Random House.*

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to 1979, tells us his life's work has been "trying to manage the almost unmanageable: intellectuals." This sounds rather hard-boiled; but then intellectuals have always been a touchy point for *Time* and its various spinoffs. Henry Luce, says Donovan, was "distressed that intellectuals and academics didn't much esteem *Time;* many loathed it." In his indignation, as in so much else, Luce intriguingly resembled that other great media mogul, William Randolph Hearst. Both saw themselves as unelected tribunes—Hearst of the common man, Luce of Middle America. Both, too, had an unmistakable genius—Hearst for concocting news, Luce for packaging it.

Still there were the intellectuals, and Luce craved their approval. His solution was to put them on his payroll: John Kenneth Galbraith, Daniel Bell, Dwight Macdonald, not to mention such gifted writers as James Agee, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Fitzgerald, and John Hersey. Once inside the gate, eggheads could expect a seigneurial summons to Luce's office to chew over Big Ideas. The nation's top communications company operated like a think-tank. "The most compelling aspect of my job," Donovan writes, "was 'policy.' What should Time Inc. think?"

Donovan was, in most respects, Luce's man. He too pledged his fealty "to the belief that our journalism should serve the public interest," and he too worried about the "moral and aesthetic vulnerability attaching to the press" because it performs "its indispensable role in our political process 'for money.' " Note the quotation marks encircling the last two words; note, too, the Arnoldian coupling of "moral" and "aesthetic." For Donovan, the highbrow hex remained in force; nothing stings like the taunt of "Philistine!"

But Donovan squarely met at least one crucial question that Luce preferred to sidestep, namely, if everyone (even intellectuals) has a boss, who, then, ultimately rides herd on the bosses of Time Inc.? Luce, as tribune, fancied it was his readers; thus he called himself editor-in-chief—conjuring up folksy visions of a small-town newspaperman, with ink-stained fingers and a green eyeshade—rather than, say, president, though he was perched atop a tentacular empire and enjoyed chummy relations with heads of state. Donovan, who inherited Luce's anomalous title along with his job in 1964, knew better: the bosses were, in fact, the investors, whose influence must be formalized. Donovan did this by adding more outsiders to the Board of Directors and, at the same time, spelling out the limits of their control. He also clarified his own obligations:

> If any Time Inc. publication had done an injustice, I thought it was entirely reasonable for the aggrieved party to tell me about it and expect me to do something about it. I couldn't always, but

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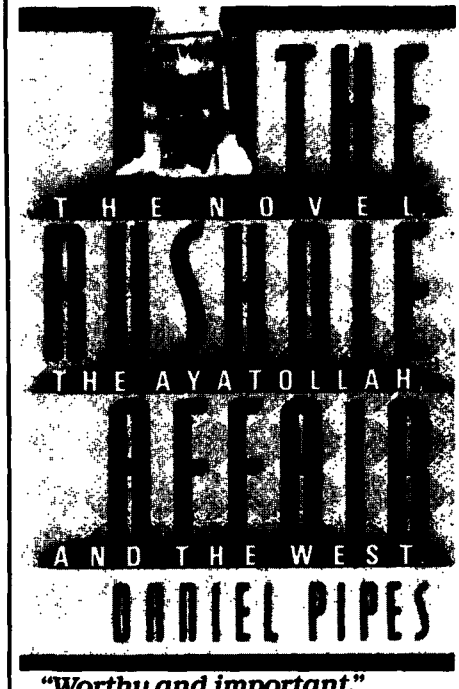

"Worthy and important."
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The publication of *The Satanic Verses* sparked an international controversy and pitted the fundamentalist Muslim world against the free-thinking West. Now Daniel Pipes, Director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, explains why the release of Salman Rushdie's book became a cataclysmic event with far-reaching consequences.

In The Rushdie Affair, Pipes details what the fundamentalists perceived, and what the novel actually said, that proved so offensive to Muslims. He spells out the chilling, long-term implications of the crisis. While the distant Ayatollah imposed his wishes to intimidate the West, who's to say others won't do the same? What does the future hold for the millions of Muslims living in the U.S. and Europe? How can we possibly assimilate a culture that is so alien to ours?

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that's where accountability starts: with the name, address, phone number of an individual empowered by his organization, and temperamentally disposed, to stand up and answer.

This marked a sharp break from the practiced avoidance of Luce, who foisted grim tasks onto others (he could not bring himself to fire employees) and who was not above softening copy, especially if it annoyed friends in the White House. Under Donovan, this changed—firmly but quietly; and so did *Time*, though not necessarily for the better. We sometimes have to squint past Donovan's mild remarks to glimpse his impact, not because there is a shortage of evidence but because he reveres Luce and regards his own succession as "apostolic." Few would disagree, however, that the *Time* of the 1960's and 70's evolved a new style. It shed the symptomatic cuteness and jokey argot. It became less cocksure. It also lost its pungency, its flamboyance, and its sweep.

There had been something daring about the infant *Time;* even its absurd neologisms ("cinemactress") and crass locutions ("First Novelist") were sly and knowing; some ("balding") crept into general usage. Like those other monoliths created in the 1920's, the *New Yorker* and *Reader's Digest,* it genially invited parody. Donovan's *Time* shifted toward the oracular neutrality that today is equated, for some reason, with fair-mindedness. Much of the difference was owing to individual writers and editors, but it was Donovan who set the tone.

But to be, well, fair-minded, Donovan ascended to the corner office at a moment when a fixed point of view seemed impossible for anyone to sustain; the nation was in the throes of an identity crisis. The traumas of the Luce era—the Depression and World War II—were, in retrospect, simple, made for patriotic copy. Donovan, no less sold than Luce on the American Dream, had to grapple with, among other things, Vietnam ("I don't think there was a day in my first decade as editor-in-chief that Vietnam didn't figure in my work") and Watergate ("the biggest domestic news story since the Depression").

ASIDE from some leaden tips on management (unfortunately, they come in the first chapter), *Right Places, Right Times* is an absorbing book. Donovan is among the few powerful executives of his generation who write their own sentences; this automatically adds interest to his memoir, even when he addresses that potentially lethal subject, his irresistible rise to success. When he delves into the past, the autobiographer's most tonic exercise, he becomes almost lyrical, notably in the early chapters, a hymn to a vanished age, pleasantly redolent of Booth Tarkington.

Donovan was born in 1914 into a cheerful, upper-middle-class, rock-ribbed Republican home. He had a paper route, went to (a Baptist) church, excelled in the classroom (skipping several grades), took a pretty girl to the prom. The Depression canceled his plans to attend college in the East, but he flourished on his hometown campus, the University of Minnesota ("it was a kind of Hard Times Golden Age"). His ambition was to become a BMOC, which he accomplished by running the student daily and importing big-shot lecturers. Then came three comfortable years at Oxford, as a Rhodes Scholar. He got a "very respectable" Second in history, played hockey, and returned as a confirmed Anglophile. In 1937, he landed a reporter's job on the Washington *Post,* not yet a major daily, and his future was decided. He married, coasted through wartime duties editing a Navy intelligence sheet, then grasped the brass ring of *Fortune* and fame.

As the title of Donovan's memoir suggests, his timing was perfect. He joined *Fortune* in 1945, the beginning of the postwar boom and of a golden age for American business. The toniest of the Luce publications, *Fortune* sang monthly praises to the nation's corporations, and Donovan was an enthusiastic bard. Less skeptical than his colleague William H. Whyte, who would write *The Organization Man,* Donovan warmed up to the men in gray flannel suits. He admired their management techniques, their values, their profit margins. And he felt at home in the corporate corridors of Time Inc. His copy was slick (he trots out some paragraphs); he met his deadlines; he got along. He was, in yesterday's phrase, executive material.

In 1953, he leapfrogged over older and more experienced men to assume the managing editorship of *Fortune.* Other writers feared such responsibility. Donovan relished it. He was equally adept at cropping photos and trimming budgets and he had an unenvious eye for fresh talent. None of this was lost on Luce, another fan of big business, who chose Donovan as his deputy in 1959. Nor was it lost on Donovan's peers. He made few enemies and won the loyalty even of his rivals. He was always, it seemed, the consensus man for the job—if not the most brilliant, then the steadiest; if not the most seasoned, then the most energetic. It helped that he starred at the annual sales conference.

DONOVAN focuses on wins rather than losses. He is curiously tight-lipped, for instance, about a stint as "senior adviser" to Jimmy Carter during the latter's bungled presidency. But he dwells gamely on his worst setback: *Life.* When Donovan took over as editor-in-chief, "The Big Red," as ad salesmen called *Life,* was in the black, barely. It claimed the largest audience, by far, of Luce's publications (seven million subscribers to *Time*'s two million), but it was losing ground to television, which brought more images, more immediately, into America's living rooms. Donovan loyally propped up the magazine a year longer than he should have and finally gave up on it in 1972. *Life* later resurfaced as a monthly, but its true replacement, and Donovan's brightest coup, was *People,* which sagely tied into TV rather than compete with it.

Donovan is not an introspective writer but he is a candid one, beginning with the title he has chosen for his book. *Right Places, Right Times* are the careerist's words for serendipity. Donovan

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does not apologize for his success, or pretend he was not hungry for it. Born into a world that welcomed him, he did not blink when his chance came for a piece of the action. He went about his business calmly and expertly. He seems to have been a good boss—eager to promote, happy to share the glory, prepared to shoulder blame. Now and again his vanity shows; he brags about his excessive modesty and twice informs us that others thought he would make a good president—not of Time Inc. but of the United States. At least—like Luce and unlike Hearst—he had the good sense not to run.

Beyond the Computer

THE EMPEROR'S NEW MIND: CONCERNING COMPUTERS, MIND, AND THE LAWS OF PHYSICS. By ROGER PENROSE. *Oxford University Press. 466 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by JEFFREY MARSH

For the past two years, Stephen Hawking's *A Short History of Time* has been ensconced on the best-seller list, a rather unusual place for a serious work that deals with a scientific topic. Recently it was joined for a bit by a considerably longer book by Roger Penrose, the equally eminent mathematical physicist whose work on black holes provided the original inspiration for Hawking's Ph.D. thesis. And although it might seem that no subject could range farther than Hawking's—the creation and ultimate fate of the universe—Penrose has chosen one even more ambitious. He addresses here nothing less than the question of the nature of the human mind, approaching it by way of a broad array of scientific disciplines, among them, surprisingly, cosmology.

The central issue of *The Emperor's New Mind* is whether the human mind is simply a highly complex computer. If that is the case, then it should be possible in principle, as Alan Turing suggested some forty years ago, to construct a computer whose workings so closely resemble human thought that it will respond to any question put to it with an answer indistinguishable from one that might be given by a human. Yet, while some computers have indeed been programmed to mimic quite convincingly certain kinds of dialogue—in particular, and rather bizarrely, conversations between psychotherapists and their disturbed patients—no machine constructed to date has shown anything approaching the capability to pass the Turing intelligence test. Still, computers have been around for only forty or fifty years, and many physical scientists and not a few philosophers believe that eventually it will be possible to construct (or, more precisely, to program) one that will do so.

Penrose is emphatically not an adherent of that school of thought. In *The Emperor's New Mind*, he explains why he believes that the principles governing the operations of computers cannot adequately model the workings of the mind. Instead, he proposes the more sweeping and controversial thesis that human thought processes transcend the laws of physics and chemistry currently known. In the course of advancing this proposition, he explores the theories of computer science as well as mathematical logic, classical physics and relativity, quantum mechanics and neurophysiology.

PENROSE begins with a discussion of the nature of computers and the way they work, summarizing the ideas of Turing, who in the 1930's and 40's described an idealized computer, the so-called Turing machine. Such a machine tackles complex mathematical problems by following a systematic set of instructions (or algorithms), performing one step at a time until the answer emerges and the machine stops. As a mathematician, Turing

JEFFREY MARSH, *who reviewed Robert Jastrow's* Journey to the Stars *in our January issue, writes on science for* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals.*

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was interested in the fundamental question of whether there existed in theory a universal algorithm—a recipe by which a computer could solve *any* mathematical problem. He answered his question in the negative, in an elegant argument that used reasoning similar to that introduced earlier by Kurt Gödel in his famous theorem about the unprovability of some mathematical statements whose truth might nevertheless be apparent to an observer outside the closed logical system. So, asks Penrose, how could the human brain be simply a computer, programmed to follow set algorithms, if it can answer questions unsolvable by following a prescribed set of rules?

As an especially gifted and creative mathematician, Penrose is well aware of the reality of intuition, and of the fact that the systematic logical structure of theorems and proofs that mathematicians use to present their results is far removed from the creative flash of insight by which those results are actually derived. He suggests that there is a real world of mathematical truth that is not captured by formalism, and *that* is the world in which the human mind is at home.

To Penrose, moreover, the ideas that mathematicians create as they extend previously existing concepts seem to bear an uncanny relation to the realest of real worlds, namely, the physical universe. For example, over the course of millennia mathematicians have expanded the concept of number, to which children are introduced in the most primitive sense when they are taught to count. Seeking to generalize the concept so that every arithmetical problem has a meaningful solution, mathematical thinkers have broadened it to include negative, rational, irrational, and transcendental numbers, eventually making the system complete by inventing complex numbers. These are strange hybrids that pair real numbers, in all their prosaic solidity, with imaginary numbers based on the invented and apparently absurd idea of taking the square root of a negative number. Yet it turns out that complex numbers are needed to describe the behavior of real objects in the world.

They are especially needed for the theory of relativity, which completed classical physics by uniting space with time and matter with energy, and they are absolutely essential to quantum mechanics. The paradoxical results of quantum mechanics, far from what would be predicted by the common sense instilled by experience in the everyday world, are nevertheless well proved by experiments in the world of submicroscopic particles and are utilized in the amazing electronic devices that have proliferated during the 20th century.

THE theory of quantum mechanics is fully established. Penrose himself assigns it, along with Euclidean geometry, to the category he terms SUPERB (the eccentric use of capitalization is his own). But he is troubled by some fundamental gaps in our understanding of it—in particular, the famous question of how an isolated physical system which goes along quite happily on its own as a mixture of mutually exclusive possible states is somehow reduced to one definite but unpredictable state when someone observes it, and then how repeated observation produces a distribution of states that occur with a predictable probability. Perhaps even more puzzling, it appears that objects far too distant from each other to communicate in the manner prescribed by relativity (another SUPERB theory) seem to have instantaneous knowledge of each other's state.

Many attempts have been made to explain these paradoxes, the most imaginative being that the world is continuously splitting into an ever-growing series of different parallel worlds, but Penrose finds none of them logically satisfactory. He is also troubled by the problem of cosmology. The current state of the universe implies that creation occurred by means of a "big bang," but on the basis of the second law of thermodynamics the probability of that incredibly hot and dense state ever occurring is inconceivably minute.

The solution to this problem, as well as to those raised by quantum mechanics, Penrose feels, must come from a synthesis of quantum mechanics and gravitation. In particular, such a synthesis would explain how localized phenomena somehow carry within themselves some "knowledge" of the state of the universe at large. It would also, he hopes, show how the mind is able to think creatively, jumping from isolated thoughts dealing with disparate matters to a more general understanding. And finally such a synthesis would help to explain the phenomenon of consciousness that enables a mind to decide what to do and to communicate with other minds.

IN SLIGHTLY over 450 pages Penrose covers a wide range of exceedingly difficult topics. These are frequently mathematical in nature, and many of the points he makes are subtle, but the book is written in a conversational and highly individualistic style. Penrose's enthusiasm leads him into lengthy digressions that illustrate many of his particular interests and original contributions to a variety of scientific and technical fields. While he sometimes goes into considerably more detail than some readers may be prepared for, the exercise serves as an excellent demonstration of his thesis that the mind is far more than a computing device. As a thoroughgoing scientist, Penrose never refers to the concept of revelation; but as he describes the relationship between the human mind and the underlying reality of the universe, that is inevitably the word that springs to mind.

Enemies of Culture

TENURED RADICALS: HOW POLITICS HAS CORRUPTED OUR HIGHER EDUCATION. By ROGER KIMBALL. *Harper & Row. 204 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by
ANITA SUSAN GROSSMAN

ANYONE familiar with the ongoing debate on humanistic education sparked by Allan Bloom's

ANITA SUSAN GROSSMAN *is a free-lance writer who lives in California.*

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The Closing of the American Mind, E.D. Hirsch, Jr.'s *Cultural Literacy*, and two successive reports by the National Endowment for the Humanities, issued under William J. Bennett and Lynne V. Cheney, will recognize many of the charges leveled in this book. Seldom, however, has the case been made so eloquently, or with such keen awareness of the underlying issues at stake.

For Roger Kimball, managing editor of the *New Criterion*, the debate on "opening" the literary "canon" has been accompanied by a trivialization of the humanities curriculum and the obliteration of any distinction between high culture and pop entertainment. Under the name of "theory," criticism has usurped the role of the work of art it supposedly illuminates. More generally, American higher education is under assault by a number of movements such as radical feminism, deconstruction, and ethnic studies, which seek to subordinate traditional scholarly inquiry to left-wing politics, and thereby threaten the very basis of academic disciplines.

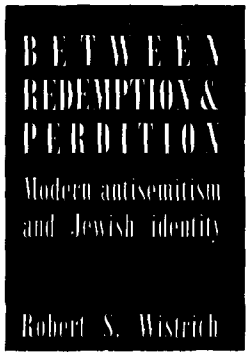
At interdisciplinary symposiums held on campuses across the nation, and in the pages of scholarly books and journals, many of the leading critics at our best universities seem intent on attacking the cultural tradition that nourished them. Their indictment rests on the familiar charges that Western culture is "ethnocentric," "sexist," "racist," "elitist," and so forth, but whatever the label, the purpose is to downgrade the notion of a common cultural heritage to be preserved and transmitted to a new generation.

As KIMBALL observes, the radical skepticism espoused by these critics verges on a kind of nihilism. In the hands of deconstructionists it leads to the denial that communication itself is possible, or that texts can ever have determinate meanings. Reading is thus reduced to a game, as all distinctions between art and non-art disappear.

In debunking the notion of objectivity, such academics deny the possibility of unbiased judgment or the disinterested pursuit of truth. Their contempt for empiricism, Kimball points out, betrays a misunderstanding of the first principles of science. As for their related claim that "all reading is ideological," this, Kimball writes, tends to subvert the very basis of liberal democracy, for "if one can no longer cogently distinguish between impartial judgment and *parti pris* lobbying, between dispassionate description and partisan propaganda, one can no longer make sense of the moral and intellectual ideals on which our society is based." Indeed, it is a sign of our cultural decadence that such terms as "humanism," "liberalism," "objectivity," "disinterestedness," and "truth" have, in Kimball's words, "been drained of meaning and are now regarded, precisely, as 'moribund' by men and women whose lives were once devoted to the ideals these words named."

Moreover, for all their anarchic or nihilistic opposition to the idea that texts have determinable meanings, and for all their talk of "challenging authority," "demystification," and "questioning assumptions," the tenured radicals of academe betray a strong authoritarian streak. They may repudiate as "undemocratic" the belief that some books may be more valuable than others, but they are quick to impose their own political agenda on students and colleagues. As a result, those opposed to the new orthodoxy on campus are apt to be cowed into silence by the general climate of intolerance, typified by the new "anti-harassment" statutes abridging free speech in the name of "sensitivity."

KIMBALL limits his analysis to the arts and humanities, and within them to particular representative events, publications, and figures. Those unacquainted with recent



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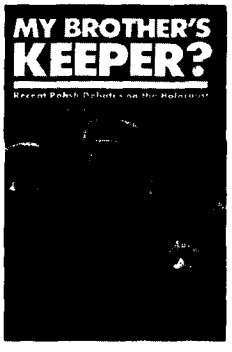

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developments in art and architecture will find enlightening his dissection of *October*, a journal which combines Marxist posturing and avant-garde chic; or the absurdities of "deconstructive" architecture as promulgated in the writings of Peter Eisenman and Charles Jencks.

An entire chapter is devoted to Stanley Fish, a literary theorist whose facile philosophical skepticism has always kept him one step ahead of his critics; another, to the apologists for the late Paul de Man who have attempted to portray that critic's early writings for a collaborationist Belgian newspaper as a linguistic rather than a moral lapse. In reports on various symposiums and colloquiums he attended around the country, Kimball gives us a veritable gallery of knaves and fools condemning themselves with their own words.

On the whole, it is hard to fault Kimball's analysis. If anything, the situation is worse than he describes, since his book says nothing about the condition of the social sciences, where political indoctrination often constitutes a major part of the curriculum; or the baleful effects of affirmative action in college admissions and faculty hiring—the ultimate triumph, one might say, of political considerations over scholarship. Then, too, Kimball refers only briefly to the vast inroads made by the legal system into educational matters, with the threat of litigation, often government-supported, used to intimidate and control members of the campus community in the conduct of their business—a subject treated, for example, in John Silber's *Straight Shooting*.

How did we arrive at this state of affairs? According to Kimball, the fault lies with erstwhile student radicals of the 60's who now occupy positions of power in the academy as senior faculty and administrators; it is they, rather than today's students, who are acting to subvert the traditional idea of the liberal arts and to politicize the curriculum.

Well, yes and no: as I write in Berkeley, campus protesters have marched on the chancellor's office to demand the establishment of a gay/lesbian/bisexual studies department, enlargement of the already-existing affirmative-action quotas for admission of minority students, and immediate tenure for two minority faculty members, one of whom was let go by her department some years ago. So much for the death of student radicalism—at least in that time warp known as the University of California at Berkeley.

What, then, can be done? Is the simple act of exposure and ridicule enough? In the case of an applied discipline like architecture, the danger may be self-limiting, since the need for habitable buildings will probably always keep deconstructionists in the academy and on the fringes of the field; buildings that overthrow our "anthropocentric" preconceptions are likely to find as limited a market as there is in the fashion industry for, say, three-legged trousers. But the liberal arts are another matter, and it is quite possible that they will not survive the threat from within. The National Association of Scholars, founded a couple of years ago, aims to counteract the politicizing tendencies noted by Kimball, but what the organization can actually accomplish remains to be seen. That leaves parents and taxpayers, who may tire in time of subsidizing the more outrageous antics of the radicals; so far, however, their patience has seemed inexhaustible.

MOST of Kimball's book appeared previously over the past few years as separate essays in the *New Criterion*, and although these have been revised and updated with new material, the volume is still essentially a collection, a fact about which Kimball is curiously unforthcoming. Then, too, the book stops cold with an account of a conference on the humanities at Williams College last September; no attempt is made to sum up the general case or to offer any solution.

Still, despite minor defects, *Tenured Radicals* remains a formidable polemic against the enemies of culture entrenched in our universities, and it deserves to be widely read.

The Riddle of Noriega

OUR MAN IN PANAMA. By JOHN DINGES. *Random House. 402 pp. $21.95.*

DIVORCING THE DICTATOR. By FREDERICK KEMPE. *Putnam. 469 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID BROCK

DICTATOR, drug dealer, double agent, sexual deviant, devil worshiper, Manuel Antonio Noriega was one of the most unlovable characters on the international scene in recent years. He rose to power in Panama by deftly playing all sides, backing coups against his supposed mentors, functioning as a surrogate for Fidel Castro and the Sandinistas, harboring Colombia's cocaine kingpins, and lunching with the director of the CIA. Such tactics, which the general proudly considered an imitation of the psychological warfare once waged by Genghis Khan, engendered an air of mystery about the "real" Noriega, and that same enigmatic air has suffused most of the post-mortems of his reign in the press following the U.S. invasion of Panama last December. These two quickly published books on Noriega's rise and demise help to dispel the riddle, if not always in ways intended by their authors.

The two books well complement each other. In *Our Man in Panama*, John Dinges, a veteran correspondent now with National Public Radio, provides a finely honed context for understanding the dynamics of internal Panamanian politics. In Panama, as compared with other Latin American countries, for years the poor were not as poor, the rich not as rich, the regime not as repressive, the bureaucracy not as corrupt. This began to change only in the late 1960's, when a fairly benevolent oligarchy split in two, producing a populist-authoritarian strain that culminated in 1968 in a coup led by General Omar Torrijos. Dinges gives Torrijos credit for imbuing the citizen-

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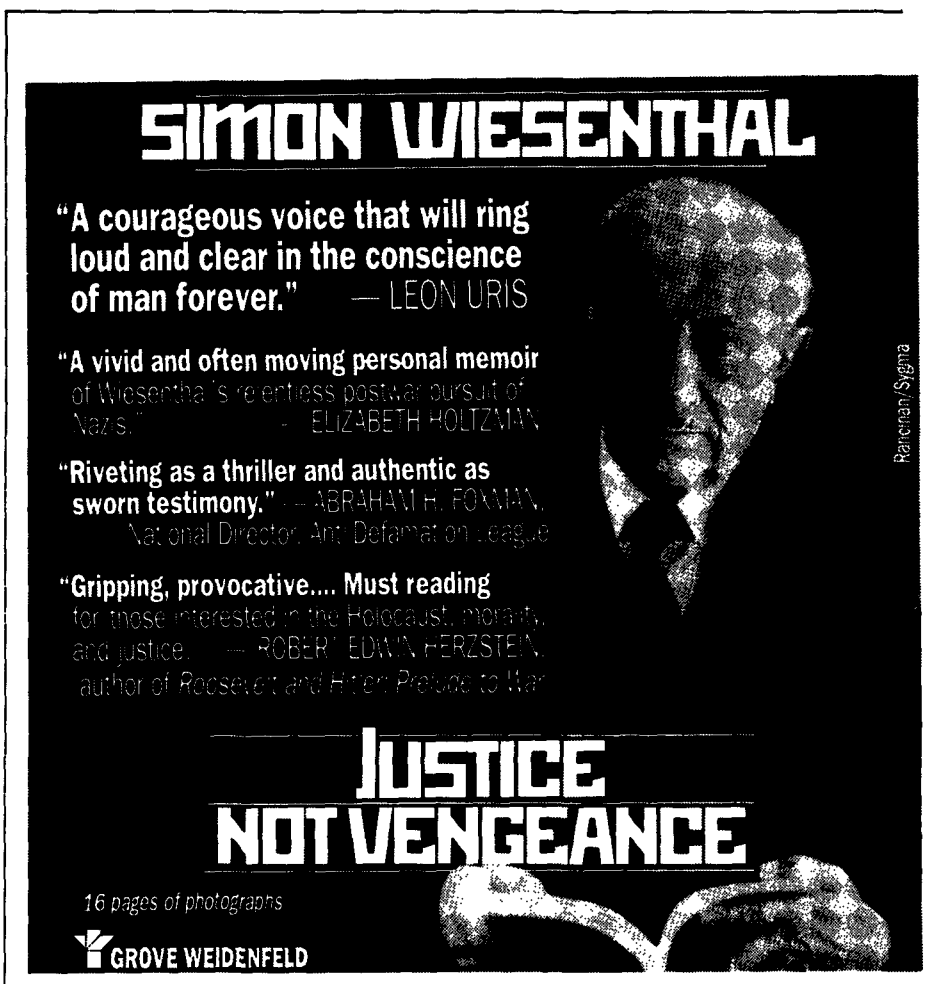
ry with an "inchoate national pride," but his regime also suffocated democratic tendencies and plunged knee-deep into all manner of dark dealings, from money-laundering to arms-trading to intelligence-gathering. It was this amoral, clandestine hub that spawned Noriega, "a slum kid from Terraplen" who made himself a feared figure first as Torrijos's military-intelligence chief and then, after Torrijos's death in 1981, as the most powerful man in the country.

In *Divorcing the Dictator*, Frederick Kempe, diplomatic correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, demonstrates little feel for the subtleties of Panamanian life and often ends up confusing rather than clarifying domestic political events. But of the two authors he has dug up the more colorful tidbits (such as how Noriega, in his "softer" moments, favored yellow patent-leather shoes), and his is the more successful account of the long and tortured relationship between Noriega and the U.S. government.

In both books the leitmotif is the allegedly instrumental role that Noriega's relationship with the U.S. government played in his own advance. But the evidence the two authors muster does not add up to anything close to a cause-and-effect case. Noriega's link with the CIA began with his recruitment when he was still a cadet in a Peruvian military academy in 1958, and continued as he rose through the National Guard ranks back in Panama. Yet by the early 1970's the Nixon administration was already entertaining serious doubts about him, concerned that both he and Torrijos were forging an arms- and drug-running nexus with Cuban intelligence. Sensing, correctly, that Noriega's "cooperation" extended only to turning in his own enemies, the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs drew up a plan for his "immobilization." But that operation—in fact, *any* covert option or even intelligence-gathering operation in Panama—was scuttled by post-Watergate skittishness on the part of Congress. This leads to a conclusion the authors do not draw, namely, that Noriega's rise in the middle-1970's was not a function of CIA complicity but rather coincided with the CIA's decline. A decade later, in a sad but entirely predictable rerun, the Reagan administration was similarly hamstrung in its efforts to depose Noriega at the very moment when he was most vulnerable to a U.S. challenge.

But this is getting ahead of the story. In 1977 came a decision by President Carter's CIA director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, to terminate the CIA's contract with the general. The Carter administration, however, continued to do business with him; in fact, Kempe insists that "Noriega thrived as never before under Carter." In the interest of getting the Panama Canal treaties ratified, giving haven to the Shah of Iran, and deposing Anastasio Somoza, Carter officials "continued to play down and sometimes conceal Noriega's crimes," while at the same time doing everything they could to legitimize the Torrijos dictatorship. Thus, the State Department leaked the details of a plan by the U.S. Attorney in Miami to nab Noriega on a gun-running charge on his way to Washington, the Justice Department quashed an indictment of Torrijos's brother, and CIA field agents were instructed to "quit devoting so much time and energy to logging all the arms shipments to the Sandinistas that Noriega and Torrijos were facilitating." When viewed against today's attempt to discredit the Reagan-Bush administrations for their dealings with Noriega, Kempe's chapter on the doings of Carter's political appointees—a sordid history of which, for his part, Dinges seems largely unaware—is most instructive.

One longstanding criticism of U.S. policy in Panama, repeated by both authors, focuses on Noriega's habit of currying favor with officials on the basis of quid pro quos: to the Department of Defense he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offered Panama as a staging base, and to the CIA he volunteered Panama as a regional listening post. In return, the story goes, these agencies saw to it that the Noriega regime remained ensconced in power. Yet on the "quid" side, Dinges finds that "the most important Panamanian contribution was passive: not preventing the conversion of U.S. Southcom into the nerve center for U.S. operations in the region"; and Kempe concludes that "Noriega was playing a game that had become familiar to him: he was offering American intelligence a minimum of help and extracting from it a maximum of protection." Certainly these arrangements do not approximate a "marriage," Noriega's own blustering notwithstanding.

As for the "quo" side, as Kempe tells it, in the mid-1980's, when Noriega stole an election, moved violently against the opposition, and became involved in major cocaine trafficking, all for the first time, a debate broke out within the Reagan administration that pitted an aggressively punitive State Department against a hesitant Pentagon, and even the hesitancy of the Pentagon was motivated more by post-Vietnam conservatism than by any fondness for Noriega. By early 1988, when the U.S. Attorney in Miami was poised to indict Noriega on charges of guaranteeing drug traffickers a virtual free-trade zone for their shipments, not one U.S. official in Washington raised an objection.

A second common criticism repeated by these authors would have it that cozy relations with Noriega were necessary to the success of American actions in Nicaragua. Thus, Dinges writes that "The idea was to push Central Americans toward providing 'lethal assistance' to the *contras*, which the U.S. was forbidden to do under the Boland amendment," yet he later asserts, "what agreements were reached with Panama are still secret." *Very* secret, apparently. Dinges describes with glee a meeting in which Oliver North allegedly sought Noriega's help in training the *contras*, but then admits in an aside that "apparently, no training took place." Moreover, during the time when North was searching desperately for foreign aid for a resistance force that had been cut off by Congress, "North's notebooks and computers said very little at all about Panama." At another point, Dinges has Noriega promising U.S. officials he would "take immediate actions against the Sandinistas," but in the end, "it could not be learned which, if any, of those actions Noriega carried out." For his part, Kempe turns up one payment of $100,000 from Noriega to former *contra* Eden Pastora, which cannot be said to have much helped the resistance cause. The rest of Kempe's argument consists of clairvoyance: "Bush was worried about the Nicaraguan threat and money-laundering on a trip to Panama. In Noriega's mind, he thought Bush was saying that if Panama helped the *contras* it would defuse criticism about money-laundering." And so forth.

If Dinges and Kempe fail to substantiate the story about Noriega they have set out to tell, they altogether miss a more serious and provocative story—the one about his associations with Fidel Castro, Daniel Ortega, Colombia's Medellín drug cartel, and Communist guerrillas in Colombia and El Salvador. None of this has ever been more than a blip on the radar screen of the prestige press. Kempe, it is true, supplies a tantalizing glimpse: at a moment when U.S. economic sanctions had ground the Panamanian banking system to a virtual halt, direly needed dollars were flown on Aeroflot through Havana into Panama City. Dinges finds dubious another account of the Castro-Noriega connection, according to which Noriega called on the Cuban leader to mediate his dispute with the Medellín cartel. Unfortunately for Dinges, this well-documented episode promises to be the main event in Noriega's Miami trial.

Concerning the decision by President Bush in December 1989 to remove Noriega from power through military force—the one unquestionably successful U.S. policy in Panama—our authors suddenly have precious little to say. Dinges believes the invasion was ordered because "George Bush was hoping to dispel once and for all the 'wimp factor' that had dogged his presidency," and Kempe writes without further elaboration that it signified a wider "failure" of U.S. policy. Following as it does upon lengthy disquisitions on just about every supposed misstep made by U.S. policy-makers in the course of twenty years, so empty an analysis seems curious, to say the least. Yet it actually dovetails quite nicely with what has gone before. At bottom, both these books reveal more about the modern media culture from which they spring than they do about Manuel Noriega or U.S. foreign policy. Neither author can screw up the courage to argue his case against that policy honestly, for doing so would inevitably lead to endorsing, in retrospect, a more assertive policy of unilateral intervention in Panamanian affairs. Instead, and given their visceral bias against *any* American interest or position, about all they can leave us to conclude is that the best U.S. foreign policy is no U.S. foreign policy at all. The explanatory power of such a sentiment is not exactly high.

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